
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 November 2017

by Andrew McCormack BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 24 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/17/3181120

12 Wool Road, West Wimbledon, London SW20 0HW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mike Williams against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 17/P0704, dated 15 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey side extension to north of dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Mike Williams against the Council of the London Borough of Merton. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the surrounding area, with particular regard to the Merton (Wool Road) Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a large detached two storey dwelling on a spacious corner plot at the junction of Wool Road and Dunstall Road. The area is residential in character and the majority of properties in the locality, including the appeal property, are large dwellings on spacious, landscaped plots. The host property is within the Merton (Wool Road) Conservation Area (CA) and the area around the junction between Wool Road and Dunstall Road has a spacious, verdant character. Properties are set back from the public highway and this contributes significantly to the wider character and appearance of the CA. Furthermore, the prominent position of the host property and its corner plot makes a significant contribution to the overall streetscene of the area.
5. From the submitted plans, I note that the proposed extension would include most of the land to the side of the appeal property. The side elevation of the extension would be around 2 metres from the side boundary of the site to Dunstall Road. Furthermore, the proposal would be two storeys in height and its visible position would significantly erode the open and spacious nature of the area around the nearby junction and therefore the wider character and appearance of the CA.

6. I acknowledge that the proposed extension has been designed to complement the style of the host property. Notwithstanding this, I find that the scale and prominent position of the proposal would unbalance the appearance of the host property and would be detrimental to the appearance of the surrounding area.
7. I note that a previous Inspector allowed a proposal for a single storey side extension at the property on the grounds that it would not erode the sense of openness around the Wool Road / Dunstall Road junction. Furthermore, the appellant has identified this as the fall-back position in the event that this appeal proposal was dismissed. I have given due regard to the above and find that this appeal proposal is entirely different to the allowed proposal in that it constitutes a large two storey extension rather than a modest single storey proposal.
8. Furthermore, I have given due consideration to the appellant's points regarding spaciousness and openness, as considered by the Inspector in dealing with the allowed single storey scheme. Notwithstanding this, and in any event, whilst these matters are material considerations to which I have attached due weight, I must assess the appeal proposal before me on its own merits and circumstances and I confirm that I have done so in determining this appeal.
9. The appellant argues that the proposal respects and complements the design and detailing of the original building by using similar materials and design features. Furthermore, it is argued that the proposal would be subservient to the main property and would add balance and symmetry to the appearance of the front elevation of the property. I acknowledge that the material, as proposed would complement the existing property and its appearance. However, from the submitted drawings, I find that the proposal would not provide a balanced, symmetrical appearance to the frontage of the property. Indeed, based on what I have seen and read, it is my view that the proposal would adversely affect the appearance of the frontage of the property in terms of its balance and symmetry.
10. Whilst I appreciate the Inspector's comments in relation to the allowed scheme, I find that the position, height and scale of the appeal proposal before me would have a greater detrimental impact on openness and spaciousness. The proposal would, at two storey height, move to about 2 metres of the site boundary along Dunstall Road. Although I note that the site is well screened by trees and foliage and that the proposal would be subservient to the main property, I find that the overall bulk of the proposal would have an adverse impact on the openness of the area and diminish its spacious character and appearance.
11. I acknowledge the individual design and nature of properties in the immediate surrounding area, noting that each has its own particular style and character which contributes toward the overall character and appearance of the locality. However, I find that the particular scale and bulk of the proposed two-storey extension would be too great for the host property and would result in significant visual harm to the surrounding area, including the CA.
12. There is no established pattern of development in the locality. Therefore, in that regard, I note that the proposal would not be out of keeping with other properties in the area. Furthermore, I note the north elevation of the proposed extension would be similar to that of the existing north facing elevation of the appeal property. As a result, it is argued that there would be minimal impact on the appearance of the appeal property when viewed from the area to the north.
13. The appellant has also stated that the impact of the proposed development would be limited due to a number of other measures. These include the use of similar materials to the host property so that the extension would visually complement the

overall appearance of the appeal property and the wider streetscene and CA. Moreover, the appellant argues that the proposal would be an improvement on the approved single storey scheme and would be more in keeping with the wider character and appearance of the CA. In addition, the appellant states that the proposal would be screened from view by trees and landscaping on the site. As such, there would be minimal effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and it is stated that the proposal would cause no threat to trees within the boundary of the property. There would also be sufficient amenity space on the site and the scheme would have no detrimental effect on the pattern of development in the area.

14. In considering all of the above, I have had special regard to the statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. As such, in accordance with Paragraphs 131 to 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), whilst the harm to the CA would not be substantial, I find that it would be of such significance that the limited public benefits of the scheme would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm identified. As a result, I find that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
15. Overall, I find that the impact of the scheme on the openness and spacious character of the CA in this particular location would be significant and harmful as the proposal would appear dominant in a particularly prominent position. Notwithstanding nearby trees and foliage, the proposed two storey extension would be highly visible and its scale and height would be detrimental to the overall character of the area. Although there is a fine balance between the benefits of the scheme and its harm, I find that the harmful impact on the character and appearance of the CA, as a designated heritage asset, would be of such significance that it outweighs the benefits of the proposal.
16. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of its surroundings with particular regard to the Merton (Wool Road) Conservation Area. Therefore, it would be contrary to Policy CS14 of the Adopted Merton Core Planning Strategy 2011 and Policies DM D2, DM D3 and DM D4 of the Adopted Merton Sites and Policies Plan 2014. Amongst other matters, these policies seek to ensure that development has no significant detrimental impact on the character or appearance of its surroundings, including designated heritage assets such as conservation areas.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McCormack

INSPECTOR