
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 October 2019

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/19/3234967

154 High Street, Old Woking, Woking GU22 9JH

- 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 and Mrs J Vincent against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2019/0334, dated 27 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension above open area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for first floor side extension above open area at 154 High Street, Old Woking, Woking GU22 9JH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PLAN/2019/0334, dated 27 March 2019, subject to the conditions set out below;
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan and Existing Plans and Elevations Drawing Number 1279/101/R1; and Site Plan and Proposed Plans and Elevations Drawing Number 1279/102.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The first-floor side elevation bathroom window of the extension hereby permitted shall be glazed entirely with obscure glass and be non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the room in which the window is installed. Once installed the window shall be permanently retained in that condition.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of development in the banner heading above from the application form. Although different to that on the decision notice and the appeal form, no details have been provided to confirm any change was agreed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue of the appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Old Woking Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the CA. As such I have had regard to the duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. For the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), the CA is a designated heritage asset.
5. From my observations, and the Old Woking Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Design Guidance (appraisal), I consider that the significance of the CA lies, in part, in its origins linked with Woking Manor and its development as a small market centre and then as a railway town. It has retained its historic street pattern growing through ribbon development with many 17th century buildings remaining. Buildings generally have a traditional form and materials, although the CA contains a variety of building types.
6. The information before me suggests that 152 High Street (No 152), which is attached to the appeal property, has previously been extended to the side. This gives an unbalanced appearance to the pair with the appeal property being narrower than No 152. Despite this, the appeal site, with its traditional form and materials contributes positively to the significance of the CA.
7. The extension would be relatively wide in comparison to the existing property and would fill more of its plot width than No 152. Nonetheless, given the narrowness of the existing dwelling the overall width of the resultant property would not be disproportionate to others in the street. Moreover, although it would reduce the separation between the appeal site and 156 High Street (No 156), there would still be a gap between the buildings. This would prevent any terracing effect. Furthermore, the smaller gap would be in keeping with the close relationship of frontages on both sides of this intimate street scape and would add to the sense of enclosure typical of this part of High Street.
8. The buttress pillars and open ground floor are features that are not typical of the area. Notwithstanding this, the extension would have a hipped roof and utilise materials to match the host dwelling. Furthermore, the scheme would help screen the large flat roof extension at the appeal property that is not characteristic of the streetscene.
9. The extension would be set back from the front building line of the appeal property and No 156. The appeal site is also located on a curve in the road. These factors and the close proximity of boundary treatments and buildings would reduce the prominence of the extension, particularly the open ground floor element, in many views along High Street.
10. Therefore, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. It would comply with the design and conservation aims of Policies CS20 and CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy, Policy DM20 of the Woking Development Management Policies Development Plan Document, Woking Design SPD, Heritage of Woking: An Historic Conservation Compendium and the appraisal. It would also accord with the heritage aims of Section 72 of the

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Framework.

Conditions

11. The standard time limit condition is imposed. For certainty I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. To protect the character and appearance of the area a condition requiring external materials to match the existing property is imposed. Finally, the glazing and opening of the first-floor bathroom window is restricted by condition to prevent impacts on the living conditions of nearby occupiers.

Conclusion

12. I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions above.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR