
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2019

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/W/19/3234628

Welfitt House, Headley Road, Grayshott, Hindhead GU26 6LG

- 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 Pets Corner UK Ltd against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application, Ref 20193/015, dated 4 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 22 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is change of use of part of first floor to create one-bedroom flat; alterations to roof including insertion of dormer windows in front and rear roof slope to allow creation of 2no. one-bedroom flats within roofspace; erection of two storey rear extension with dormer to provide access to all resulting flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on (i) the character and appearance of the area and (ii) the setting of the Grayshott Conservation Area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property comprises a late C20, detached two-storey building on the north side of Headley Road within the main shopping area of Grayshott Village Centre. It has a traditional design, with brick walls under a tiled, pitched roof. There is a single storey flat roofed extension to the rear and a single storey flat roofed extension has recently been added to the front, which incorporates floor to ceiling glazing and timber cladding on its front elevation. The ground floor is occupied by a pet food store and the first floor contains an independent flat, accessed via an external staircase at the rear of the building. The remaining part of the first floor has extant permission for use as an additional flat. There is a car park for the premises to the rear of the building, accessed from Headley Road.
4. The area is characterised by a mix of commercial and residential uses, including ground floor commercial with residential over and wholly residential properties. Two storey properties predominate, with a limited number of three storey properties also evident. Although there are full three storey buildings to

the west of the appeal site, third floors are generally accommodated within the roof space, often served by dormer windows. There are a mix of building designs, materials and roof forms, as more modern buildings have been added to the original Victorian village centre. A number of the more recent post-war buildings have been identified in the Grayshott Village Design Statement (VDS) as lacking in sympathy with the Victorian townscape, including the appeal property, the two storey retail and residential property at The Grove and the detached house opposite the appeal site, and the three storey buildings at Marlborough House and Beacon View House on the same side of the road.

5. The appeal site is adjacent to the Grayshott Conservation Area (GCA), whose boundary runs along the south side of Headley Road opposite the site. The Grayshott Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP) confirms that the GCA is based on the earliest section of the village with its predominance of late Victorian buildings, and that it encompasses the Victorian commercial village centre located around the junction of five roads. The CAMP confirms that the roads, with their strong sense of enclosure, serve to frame views. It also acknowledges that the conservation area's special architectural and historic interest derives from the distinctive architectural style of the buildings, the areas of formal and informal open space, the local landmark of St Luke's Church, and the backdrop of mature trees, and that it largely comprises Victorian/Edwardian terraces and villas set in long, narrow, linear plots.
6. The CAMP establishes that the majority of the buildings within the GCA are used for retail, with shops and related services on the ground floor and living accommodation above, and that the buildings are mainly two storey, with some second floor accommodation through partial use of the roof space. Prominent gables and decorative tile hanging on the upper floors are notable features and the CAMP explains that steeply pitched roofs and prominent chimneys provide an attractive roofscape which reads well in silhouette, and is important to maintain. The main building materials are local sandstone with brick dressings and red/orange brick, with clay hanging used extensively on upper floors. Roofs are finished in plain clay tiles or natural slate and some have patterned bargeboards.
7. Notwithstanding that the appeal property has been identified as being unsympathetic to the early form of village development, it does, nonetheless, have a strong, simple, traditional, steeply pitched roof form which is not completely at odds with the aforementioned distinguishing characteristics of the conservation area. Although the roof ridge is parallel to the street, in contrast to the many gables that front the road, the gable is nonetheless prominent in the street scene due to the set-back position of the property to its west side.
8. The appeal proposal would completely alter the roof form to that of a shallower mansard-style roof, which, aside from the mansard roof at Beacon View House further east along Headley Road, is uncharacteristic within the street scene and bears no relationship to the identified positive streetscape features within the CAMP and VDS. Beacon View House appears as an incongruous and detrimental part of the street scene, mainly due to its roof form. Although the appeal proposal would not replicate the mansard design of that property, it would nonetheless introduce a similarly discordant design element into this part of the townscape. The proposal would not respect the modest scale of the existing

building. The bulky mansard roof form to the main building and rear extension, in combination with the front and rear dormers, would result in an unduly large, and visually prominent, third floor of accommodation. The overbearing appearance of the roof would be exacerbated by the four front dormers which would not appear visually subservient in relation to the windows below, due to their large amount of roof slope coverage, position high within the roof slope, and greater horizontal design emphasis than the windows below. As a result, they would serve to draw further attention to the third floor accommodation and contribute to its over-dominant scale in relation to the main building. Accordingly, the proposal would have a materially harmful impact on the appearance of the appeal property to the detriment of the street scene and the character and appearance of the area.

9. Notwithstanding the reduction in overall roof height, and the set-back position of the two-storey element of the appeal property in comparison with the properties immediately east of the appeal site, the proposal would still be clearly visible within the street scene, particularly when viewed from the front and from the west, due to the open site frontage and the set-back position of the neighbouring property to the west in relation to the appeal property.
10. I have noted the variety of roof forms within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, including the previously mentioned three storey properties, which owing to the numbers involved do not in themselves justify allowing the appeal proposal. I have also had regard to the two and a half storey shopping precinct buildings to the east, which are served by dormer windows, which in those instances are positioned within pitched roof slopes and appear subservient in scale to the roofs and the windows below, in contrast to the appeal proposal. I also acknowledge the appellant's assertion that the proposal would add interest to the existing roof slope and an element of symmetry to the building design. However, harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the area for the reasons outlined above and so I am not persuaded by the appellant's views. Furthermore, and for the reasons outlined, I do not agree with the appellant that the proposal would result in a building that would be '*less discordant*' than exists now.
11. For the collective reasons above, I conclude that the proposed development would materially harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the aims of Policy HE2 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review 2006 (LP) and Policy CP29 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2014 (JCS), which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that new development is of an exemplary design standard which is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of its scale, height, massing, relationship to adjoining buildings and spaces around buildings, and makes a positive contribution to the overall appearance of the area, including the requirement for extensions to take account of the design, scale, character and setting of the original building and roof form of extensions to respect the form of the original building. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (the Framework) which seeks to ensure high quality design.

Setting of the Conservation Area

12. The CAMP notes that roads within the conservation area, which include Headley Road, with their strong sense of enclosure, serve to frame views. The proximity

of the appeal site to the buildings within the GCA both directly opposite the appeal site and further east and west along the same side of the road, means that within the context of the Headley Road street scene, the appeal proposal would be apparent in views which also encompass the conservation area. It would also be clearly visible when viewed from within the conservation area on the opposite side of the road. Therefore, in light of my reasoning set out in respect of the character and appearance main issue above, I find that the appeal proposal would harm the setting of the GCA.

13. In terms of the advice in Paragraph 196 of the Framework, the harm to the GCA would be '*less than substantial*'. Consequently, the Framework sets out the need to address the '*less than substantial harm*' in a balanced manner against the public benefits associated with the proposal. In doing so, however, paragraph 193 of the Framework also states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation irrespective of the degree of harm that might be caused to its significance.
14. The proposed two additional residential units over and above those of the extant planning permission, would bring some economic and social benefits, including construction jobs, increased local spend, enhancement of the vitality and viability of the village centre, and sustainably located new homes boosting the supply of housing in an area of identified need. The appellant also asserts that compliance with Building Regulations, the provision of an environmentally sustainable development and accessible residential accommodation are public benefits associated with the appeal proposal. In such terms, though in the broad scheme of things a modest contribution, these factors can and should weigh in favour of the proposal and can be considered within the context of Paragraph 196 of the Framework, public benefits.
15. In reaching the above view, I am cognisant of the Government's stated intention to extend permitted development rights to include upward extensions to create new homes. However, there is no guarantee that this proposed change will happen, and, in any event, it is necessary that I determine this appeal on the basis that at this moment in time the proposed development requires planning permission.
16. In conclusion, although the provision of two additional units of residential accommodation can be considered to provide some public benefits, they would not be of such a magnitude to outweigh the identified harm that would be caused to the setting of the GCA. Therefore, the proposal would not accord with LP Policy HE8; JCS Policy CP30 and paragraph 196 of the Framework, which seek to ensure that development does not harm the setting of, or views into or out of, conservation areas.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Leonard

INSPECTOR

