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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2019

**by Ian Harrison BA Hons DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 15 November 2019**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/19/3231288**

**Primrose Cottage, Crondall Road, Crookham Village, Fleet, Hampshire  
GU51 5SU**

- 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 Dr Lindsay Robertson against the decision of Hart District Council.
  - The application Ref 19/00399/HOU, dated 18 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 May 2019.
  - The development proposed is a two storey side extension partly erected over existing ground floor extension.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural Matter

2. The description of development used above has been taken from the planning application form. The council used a different description but in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application in the heading above.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

### Reasons

4. The site is located adjacent to Crondall Road, the Basingstoke Canal tow path and the Chequers Bridge crossing of the canal. The site contains a 2 storey detached dwelling, the front part of which is the dominant feature of the site due to its proximity to the road. The dwelling appears to have been extended to the side and rear previously with several subservient roofs running parallel and perpendicularly to the front part of the dwelling. The dwelling is one of a string of detached dwellings that front Crondall Road, some of which also appear to have been extended.
5. To the rear of the site is the property of Moles End which is a particularly large dwelling in comparison to the other dwellings of the locality. Opposite the site is agricultural land and a public car park that appears to be well-used by

visitors to the canal. Despite being within the settlement boundary of Crookham Village and the frequently use of the adjacent road and car park, the locality has a spacious, tranquil and verdant character.

6. The proposal would extend above and forward of an existing single storey extension. The extension would be set back from the front elevation of the host dwelling and would have a dual-pitched roof of differing heights, slightly lower than the ridge of the front part of the host dwelling. The roof of the extension would be able to be seen from the raised part of Crondall Road that is on the opposite side of Chequers Bridge. Fleeting views of the extension would be possible through the landscaping at the site and above the access gate that connects the site to the canal tow path.
7. The width of the extension would be similar to the width of the front part of the host dwelling and would therefore be a particularly large addition. Although the extension would be set-back from the front elevation, it would be set back so far that it would appear poorly integrated with the host dwelling. The dwelling already features a conglomeration of differing roofs and this proposal would add to this. When considered cumulatively in addition to the other extensions that have occurred, the extension would result in the dwelling having a disjointed appearance, with the extensions overwhelming the scale and form of what appears to be the original dwelling. The overall effect would therefore be that the dwelling, which is closer to the road than most properties this side of the canal, would appear as an overly wide and sprawling development.
8. Landscaping at the boundaries of the site and the changing ground levels would reduce the prominence and mitigate the effect of the extension to some degree. However, even though some trees would be protected by virtue of their location within a Conservation Area, the mitigation offered by landscaping cannot be given significant weight as it would not be possible to guarantee its retention in the long term.
9. Furthermore, whilst comparisons to the size of the dwelling at Moles End are noted, in this case it is considered that the visual impact would be substantially different as a result of the dominance of the extensions relative to the host dwelling and the greater prominence of the dwelling.
10. For these reasons the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling and its immediate locality. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies GEN1 and GEN4 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 (HDLP) which requires that development is in keeping with the local character by virtue of their scale, design, massing, layout and siting and also sustains or improves the urban design qualities that derive from the scale and design of building and spaces. The proposal is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework which requires that development is visually attractive as a result of good architecture and that permission is refused for development of poor design.
11. All parties agree that the site is within the settlement of Crookham Village and therefore it is not clear why weight should be afforded to policy RUR24 of the HDLP which relates to the extension of dwellings in the countryside. However, I do not find this policy to be decisive in the consideration of the issues as harm has also been identified under the terms of the abovementioned policies.

## **Other Matters**

12. Whilst it has been suggested that other developments have been approved which have more significant effects, this development has to be considered on its own merits and I have not been provided with sufficient information of the other developments to be able to afford them weight.
13. The Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area generally follows the canal, but also includes a finger of land that extends up to the nearby public house, including the appeal site. The Conservation Area covers a wide area, with the main feature being the canal itself, but the buildings at the application site are identified as being positive buildings and the Conservation Area Map identifies the view along Crondall Road as being significant. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.
14. From the part that I observed, it is clear that there are a number of dwellings in close proximity to the canal which have limited consistency. Therefore, whilst the existing building is a positive feature of the Conservation Area, it is not a defining feature of the significance of the heritage asset. In this context the extension would not impose on the canal or the tow path to an extent that would undermine the significance of the heritage asset as a whole. The proposal would therefore have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In this regard, I note that the Council's Assistant Conservation Officer has not objected to the proposal. However, this does not outweigh the harm that has been identified above which relates to the effect on the host dwelling and its immediate setting rather than the effect on the Conservation Area.
15. I have had regard to the input of Crookham Village Parish Council and the appellant's ecological survey which has been found acceptable by the advisor of the Council. I also note that no objection has been raised on the grounds of the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings and that a letter of support has been received in this regard. However, these factors do not outweigh the harm that has been identified above. Finally, the comments made in respect of the appellant not being able to attend the relevant Parish Council meeting fall outside the scope of this planning appeal and this is therefore not a matter that I can address.

## **Conclusion**

16. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

*Ian Harrison*

INSPECTOR