
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2019

by J Williamson BSc (Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/19/3233956

Orchard Cottages, Vale Road, Weybridge, KT13 9NW

- 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 R Ware against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/1262, dated 01 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as: two-storey side extensions and alterations to 1 and 2 Orchard Cottages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development on the Council's decision notice differs to that on the application form, provided above. I consider that the description provided on the application does not adequately describe the proposal, whereas the description provided on the Council's decision notice, which the appellant uses on the appeal form, provides a more accurate description, thus: two-storey side/rear extensions, roof extensions incorporating 1.5m increase in ridge heights and front dormer windows, front bay windows, front porches, sheds/cycle stores and bin stores following partial demolition of the existing houses and demolition of side outbuildings. This is the description of development the Council made its decision on and I shall do the same.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposed development on the host dwellings, the street scene and the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The site comprises a pair of two-storey, semi-detached dwellings, each with a single-storey flat roof side extension. The dwellings have shallow, dual-pitched roofs and are constructed mainly of red brick, with sections of hanging tiles on the front and rear elevations and tiled roofs. The site is located at the lowest point of a shallow bowl (or vale as it once may have been) and the dwellings are set back from the road and at a slightly lower level than it.
5. The site is located within a residential area which, except for the development on Grosvenor Place opposite the site where properties are three-storeys high, is characterised by two-storey properties. The dwellings comprise a mix of

short terraced properties, some with staggered frontages, semi-detached and detached dwellings. Although there is some variety in architectural styles, properties tend to have dual-pitched roofs. There is a mix of gable-ended, hipped and half-hipped properties. There are gable projections, porches and/or canopies at the front of some properties. Several have gable dormers to the rear. The external materials are generally brick and/or rendered elevations with tiled roofs.

6. The proposal would substantially alter the character and appearance of the existing pair of semi-detached dwellings; they would be wider, deeper and higher than the existing dwellings. The existing single-storey, flat-roof side extensions would be demolished and replaced with two-storey side extensions, each virtually the width of the existing dwellings, set back a little from the front elevations and extending a little beyond the existing rear elevations. The existing roof height would be increased by around 1.5 m, to create a third-floor in the roof space. The proposed dwellings would have crown roofs, with the pitch being much steeper than that of the existing dwellings. Two flat roof dormers would be positioned on the front roof slopes of each dwelling.
7. I consider the substantial increase in height, the creation of a third-storey, the crown roof design and the front dormers would result in creating a pair of semi-detached dwellings that would dominate, and be out of keeping with, the street scene.
8. The existing roof scape that extends broadly across the area of Vale Road, Vale Close, Anderson Road, Anderson Court and Grosvenor Place would be significantly disrupted. At present, as one travels down Vale Road in a north-westerly direction towards the site, the roof ridges of Orchard Cottages sit below the roof ridges of surrounding properties. The heights of existing properties broadly correspond with the topography of the area, with the properties located on the higher contours having higher roof heights. The height of the proposed roofs would disrupt the existing roofscape.
9. The mass of the proposed dwellings, with the semi-hipped gables and third-floor front dormers, would dominate the two-storey dwellings either side of the site. The roof design is one that would be alien within the street scene and the immediate surrounding area. For the reasons outlined I consider the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the host dwellings, the street scene and the character and appearance of the area.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to buildings in the wider surrounding area that have utilised crown roof designs. However, given their distance from the site they are not read in conjunction with the appeal site.
11. I appreciate that permission has already been granted for extensions and alterations to the dwellings that includes two-storey side extensions. However, the proposed development is significantly different to the approved scheme and as such I attach little weight to it as a fallback.
12. I also acknowledge that some design features of the appeal scheme are present on properties within the area. However, they have been utilised within a scheme that has an unacceptable increase in roof height.
13. Consequently, the proposed development does not accord with Policy CS4 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (2011), Policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan:

Development Management Plan, or design policies in the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies collectively, and among other things, seek to ensure that new development is of high quality design, based on an understanding of local character and preserves or enhances the character of an area with particular regard to appearance, scale, mass, height, levels and topography.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Williamson
INSPECTOR