



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2019

by D Peppitt BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/19/3230371

Robin Gate, Cotmandene, Dorking RH4 2BL

- 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 Mrs V Morris against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2019/0090, dated 16 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is single storey front, rear and side extensions, and replace roof and insert dormer windows to create habitable accommodation at first floor level.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description in the header above is taken from the Council's description which accurately describes the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular reference to the setting of Dorking Conservation Area; and
 - whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for occupiers of the neighbouring property, Denebank, with regard to overlooking and privacy and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a detached bungalow located at the end of a cul-de-sac off Moores Road. The site is bounded along the western and southern boundaries by a historic brick wall. There are residential properties to north west and north east of the property, named West Walls and Denebank respectively. To the west, there is a large expanse of open space which is part of the Dorking Conservation Area (DCA). The boundary of the DCA borders the appeal site. From the open space the roof of the appeal property is readily visible, along with the other properties in the vicinity. The properties in the

locality are detached, set on substantial plots, and vary in design and style. Therefore, there is no distinct pattern of development or design.

5. As the appeal site is adjacent to the DCA, it forms part of the setting of the Conservation Area. The Dorking Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (DCAAMP) 2010, identifies that the DCA is a large and complex historic area of some considerable quality. The significance of the DCA is derived in part from historical and aesthetic values. The DCAAMP identifies that the appeal property falls within the Character Area called Cotmandene Environs, some of which extends beyond the DCA. Whilst the appeal property is considered as part of the Cotmandene Environs, the DCAAMP does not identify it as an area included within the DCA.
6. The Appellant has directed me to properties around Cotmandene which are either new developments or have been extended or altered and sit within the DCA. I saw these on my site visit and have been provided with photographs and excerpts of the plans. However, I do not have the full details of the schemes before me or the circumstances that led to their approval. Furthermore, the developments are in different locations, and the site specifics are not comparable. In any case I must assess the proposal before me on its own planning merits and context.
7. The proposal would increase the height of the bungalow by approximately 2 metres, thereby increasing its prominence, but only by a relatively small margin, and the proposed materials would be sympathetic. The views into and out of Cotmandene are a key part of the area's special character and these would be preserved were the appeal to be allowed. Whilst the extended dwelling would be of increased bulk and height, it would not detract from the general sense of openness, and overall it would preserve the setting of the DCA. Therefore, this would not result in harm to the setting of the designated heritage asset.
8. Consequently, on the first main issue, the proposal would accord with Policies ENV22, ENV23 and ENV39 of the Mole Valley Local Plan (MVLDP), adopted October 2000 and Policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Local Development Framework Core Strategy, adopted October 2009. These policies, amongst other things, seek to promote well located and designed development that respects, and is in keeping with, the local character and appearance of the area, as well as preserving or enhancing Conservation Areas.

Living Conditions

9. The proposed first floor extension would be situated in close proximity to the boundary of the neighbouring property, Denebank. The current view towards the neighbouring property is somewhat obscured by the existing mature trees and shrubs. However, there is no guarantee that these would stay in situ. I note the appellant has stated they would be willing to plant trees along the boundary. However, I have no firm plans for this before me and in any case, there is no guarantee that these would be permanently retained in the future.
10. The first-floor windows of the proposed development would overlook Denebank and cause harm to the privacy of the neighbouring property and its outdoor garden space. The rooflights in their positioning, would also give the perception of being overlooked.

11. For all the reasons set out above, and taken together, I conclude that the proposed development would have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions for the occupiers of Denebank. It would be contrary to Policies ENV22 and ENV32 of the MVLP, which together seek to ensure good quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers of land and buildings.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

D Peppitt

INSPECTOR