
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 December 2019

by Paul Thompson DipTRP MAUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/19/3237175
47 Hanger Hill, Weybridge KT13 9XZ

- 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 Graeme Chalk against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/1651, dated 13 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Procedural Guide Planning Appeals – England states that *only the person who made the planning application can make an appeal*. In this case, the appeal was lodged by Mr Graeme Chalke. The applicant subsequently provided clarification in writing that the spelling on the appeal form of his surname is correct and they are one and the same person. Nevertheless, as the appeal cannot technically be transferred to another person, it must continue in the original name of the applicant. I have therefore considered the appeal on this basis.
3. Despite the description of development set out above, I consider the description found on the Decision Notice and the Appeal Form better reflects the scheme that is before me and that which the Council considered. The development proposed is therefore for a 'roof extension incorporating 0.75m increase in ridge height and front terrace following removal of chimney'. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on this basis.
4. Policy CS10 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (Adopted July 2011) (CS) refers to settlements in another part of the Borough (Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside). Therefore, I have not found against this policy, as it is not relevant to the determination of the appeal.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing house, the street scene and surrounding area.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is situated in a low point to the eastern side of Hanger Hill. Although it is closer to Hanger Hill, slightly taller to eaves level and deeper in floor plan than the houses to either side, this group of properties have similarities in their appearance and scale.
7. The existing roof profile of the appeal property incorporates a low-pitch, with deep overhanging eaves and prominent fascia, soffit and corbel details, which sit just above the first-floor windows. The roof terminates to a parapet to the northern façade. Meanwhile, a chimney stack is partially external to the southern façade and projects through the roof. Despite this detailing, the roof of the property is unassuming and complimentary to the scale of adjacent houses. The ground and first floors are separated by a projecting brick band and the front façade is finished with a double-height canted bay window. Taken together, these features make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the existing house, street scene and surrounding area.
8. Whilst the proposal would create a new roof form at the appeal property, that would be innovative in its design and concept, it would remove the existing architectural detailing at eaves level and raise a brick parapet around the perimeter of the roof. The proposed parapet would be to a height greater than the existing parapet would project above the eaves of neighbouring properties. The resultant area of brickwork would be extensive and unbalance the façades of the house, having a top-heavy appearance that would have an uncomfortable relationship with the first-floor windows beneath.
9. I note that there is some variety in the style and design of houses in the surrounding area, including various roof forms, such as flat and crown roofs. Nonetheless, above the parapet, the façades of the additional storey created would be almost vertical. The application drawings and the 3D visuals contained in the appellant's Planning Statement help to visualise the scale, height and mass of the proposal.
10. Despite the position of the property in a low point within the street and the proposed palette of materials being similar to the existing materials of construction, the proposal would visually crowd and distort the existing roof form. Furthermore, although some of the floor space would be set in from the parapet to the front, the proposal would occupy the remainder of the roof of the property. This would also not reduce the prominence of the proposal in views from Hanger Hill, as the terrace would be a useable outdoor space. The proposal would therefore be an incongruous addition, the detailed design and form of which would add notably to the overall scale, bulk and mass of the roof of the appeal property, including those elements that would be visible from Pyrcroft Lane, to the north.
11. I am mindful that the site is not situated within a conservation area or near to other heritage assets, so amongst other things, the preservation of the character and appearance of the area would not be afforded the same statutory protection. Nonetheless, this does not obviate the need to achieve well designed places as outlined in chapter 12 of the Framework.
12. I also appreciate that the roof of the appeal property may be a source of heat loss and wasted space to the appellant and the proposal has been designed to improve the energy efficiency of the property. Whilst this could make a positive

contribution to addressing climate change and the depletion of energy resources, the use of conventional insulation or other improvements to preserve heat within the house may be equally effective. They could also be achieved without the harm that would result from the proposal.

13. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposed development would have a significantly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing house, the street scene and surrounding area. Hence, the proposal would not accord with policy CS17 of the CS; policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan (Adopted April 2015); and the Council's Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document Companion Guide: Home Extensions (Adopted April 2012).
14. Together these policies and guidance require that the design of new development is of a high quality, which responds to the positive features of individual locations, integrating sensitively with the prevailing pattern of built development and character of the host building, in the case of extensions, and enhancing the street scene. Roof extensions should not dominate the roof by being overly large. Innovative contemporary design that embraces sustainability will be supported but only where it improves local character.
15. The proposal would also be in conflict with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Other Matters

16. I have noted that the Council did not object to the proposal on grounds of the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. However, the absence of harm in this matter would weigh neither for nor against the proposal. Similarly, the appellant has sought the views of the occupiers of properties to either side and I am not aware of any objections from these occupiers. Nonetheless, in any event, I have undertaken my own assessment of the effect of the proposal and identified harm, as outlined above.

Conclusion

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

Paul Thompson

INSPECTOR