
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2020

by P W Clark MA(Oxon) MA(TRP) MRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/19/3242599

1 Dixon Cottages, Vincent Lane, Dorking RH4 3HF

- 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 Russell and Mrs Natalia Braithwaite against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2019/1680/PLAH, dated 20 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is a ground floor and second floor extension, following demolition of the side and rear lean-to, chimney removal, external thermal insulation and new hanging tile to first floor walls.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. This consists of a mixture of vernacular buildings, largely in orange brickwork with tile-hung or rendered first floor elevations under gabled or hipped pitched roofs. Chimneys are prevalent.
3. Dixon Cottages is a terrace of three small dwellings under a communal hipped roof. They stand well forward in the street so that the full length of the flank of number 1 is visible when approaching from the south. The hipped roof and chimney are features in the street scene. The pitched roof of the rear projecting wing of the building can also be seen.
4. A certificate of lawfulness exists for the replacement of the hipped roof by a gable end and the addition of what is described as a dormer but is in fact a flat-roofed second floor extension over the rear half of the main body of the cottage. In part it would protrude rearwards of the main body of the dwelling and extend over part of its rear wing, the height of which it would exceed, although most of the ridge and hip of that feature would be retained.
5. The proposal would extend the second floor further to the rear. It would rise about 1m above the present ridge line of the rear wing, suppressing the ridge line entirely and also much of its hip and side slopes.
6. Of the various elements which comprise the facades of the cottage, only the ground floor facing brickwork currently has a vertical dimension exceeding 2m. Aesthetically, this provides a substantial base for increasingly diminutive or

recessive upper floor and roof features which establish the character of the building. By contrast, the vertical dimension of the proposed second storey would be 3m, giving the proposal an ungainly and top-heavy appearance. Because this would be visible in the street scene, it would be harmful to its character.

7. Moreover, a second difference from the certificated lawful scheme is that the proposal would remove the chimney communal to numbers 1 and 2 Dixon Cottages. This is a prominent feature in the street scene, characteristic of the buildings in the vicinity. Its loss would therefore add to the harm the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the area.
8. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy adopted in October 2009 and to policies ENV22, ENV23, and ENV32 of the Mole valley Local Plan adopted in October 2000. Amongst other matters, these require development to respect and enhance the character of the area, be appropriate to the site in terms of scale and form and retain the character and style of existing development.

P. W. Clark

Inspector