The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 January 2020 by Elizabeth Davies BSc (Hons) PIEMA

Decision by V Lucas LLB (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/D/19/3240222
23 Longdown Lane North, Epsom, Surrey KT17 3HY

- 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 Keith Boyce against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
- The application Ref 19/00719/FLH, dated 6 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 August 2019.
- The development proposed is erection of a two storey front extension and two storey rear extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area which is within the Higher Green Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal property, No 23, is a large, two storey detached dwelling located in an established residential area. The appeal property has been subject to some alterations and extensions, but retains Tudorbethan and Arts and Crafts influences. The Higher Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals document (January 2009) (the 'CA Appraisal') identifies No 23 as a 'positive' building within the CA due to its contribution to the special interest of the CA.

5. The dwellings along Longdown Lane are all large detached houses, although their designs vary, many retain elements of the Tudorbethan style which gives the road and CA a sense of cohesion. All the dwellings are set back from the road with large front gardens and driveways giving the area an open and spacious character and appearance.

6. The proposed front extension would significantly alter the front of the appeal property, appearing as an incongruous and dominant addition. Whilst the

existing prominent two storey front staircase bay would be retained and the extension has been designed to allow the staircase bay window to return, it would encroach on this feature. The roof of the extension would not sit well with the existing gable roof form, there would be an overlap which would give the house an unbalanced and overcrowded appearance and the impression that the extension has been squeezed into the space available. The proposed use of matching and complimentary materials, flat roof and eaves detailing on the front bay and reproduction of the existing sill detail of the staircase window on the ground floor front window are noted, but would not address the more fundamental issues of scale and design. The scale, positioning and design of the front extension would detract from the host property and the CA as a whole and therefore fails to preserve or enhance the CA.

7. The parties do not agree on whether the extension would extend beyond the established building line. It appears from the plans submitted with the appeal that the proposed ground floor bay would protrude slightly forward of the existing building line of the house and neighbouring properties. However, the first floor has been set further back. This slight variation of the building line at ground floor would not be perceptible given the space between the dwellings and the large set back from the road that exists and I consider this would not result in harm. The comments from the appellant regarding the neighbouring property, No 25 Longdown Lane, featuring a higher roofline than the appeal property are noted, but when assessing the specific impact of the proposed front extension, this has had little influence on my consideration.

8. Both parties refer to a previous proposal for the site which I understand involved a larger front extension and was dismissed at appeal (APP/P3610/D/19/3220243). I note that the appellant asserts that they have sought to respond to this dismissal through a number of changes to the current scheme, including a reduction in height and width and changes to the roof form and eaves height. Whilst I have not been provided with a copy of the plans for the original proposal, I can appreciate from reviewing the previous Appeal Decision that the appellant has sought to address a number of concerns that were raised. However, whilst I have had regard to the findings of the previous appeal decision, I must consider the appeal proposal before me on its own merits.

9. The proposed development also includes a rear extension which I gather from the evidence before me remains unchanged from the previous proposal. The Council and Inspector on the previous appeal raised no concerns in respect of the effect of this element of the development and I agree with this conclusion. Whilst the rear extension would be substantial, it would not overly dominate or unbalance the rear of the dwelling or be visible from the public highway and on this basis would not have an unacceptable impact on character and appearance.

10. Overall, the proposed development is contrary to Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policy DM8, DM9 and DM 10 of the Development Management Policies Document (September 2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework which seek, amongst other things, to protect, conserve and enhance the heritage assets and ensure proposals make a positive contribution to visual character and appearance and local distinctiveness.

11. The harm to the CA would be less than substantial and in such instances paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. However, although there would be a private benefit to the appellant from the extensions, there are no public benefits to weigh against the less than substantial harm to the CA.

Other Matters

12. I have considered the general acceptability of the proposal with regard to the living conditions of neighbours and note that 'important trees' as identified on the Higher Green CA Townscape appraisal map are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development. However, the lack of harm in these respects carries neutral weight and would not positively outweigh the identified harm.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Elizabeth Davies

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

V Lucas

INSPECTOR