
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 June 2020

by JP Longmuir BA (Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/20/3246174

32 Midway, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 3HZ

- 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 Julie Harding against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/2410, dated 30 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is first floor extension above existing side/rear ground floor. Minor alterations to ground floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description in the decision notice and the appeal form describe the proposal as part two storey, part first floor front/side/rear extension and side juliet balcony.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effects on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The site lies on the corner of Midway and Bowes Road. The front drive is from Midway and the house frontage is orientated accordingly. The Bowes Road elevation is more of a secondary side aspect, with a brick boundary wall. It is a spacious garden with several well pruned trees but otherwise is largely open.
5. The area is characterised by its individual designed houses set back from the road with spacious and often verdant front gardens. The architecture tends to be broken in massing, with a clearly discernible main element and subservient offshoots. Projecting gables also help to reinforce this character. Consequently, the rooflines are varied and undominant.
6. The existing dwelling has a hipped roof and subservient gabled offshoot entrance, with a detached garage on one side. The proposal is a 2 storey extension along both the Midway and Bowes Road frontages so that an 'L' shaped continuous roofline would be created, subsuming the garage.

7. The appellant indicates that the design has been chosen to create an entity rather than use extensions which appear as additions. It is also argued that the plot is large and can accommodate the design.
8. The proposed design has simplicity, and as depicted in the submitted perspective it clearly does not use subservient extensions. In my perception, this is very different to the existing dwelling which currently has a broken and unassertive roofline due to its hipped ends, modest length and projecting entrance as well as the detached garage. This proposal would create a roofline which is unbroken along both its Midway and Bowes Road elevations.
9. I consider that the continuous roofline would make the dwelling look bulky and dominating, which would be exacerbated by the 'L' shape. The balance between the various elements would be lost which would diminish the building's interest. It would also undermine the central focus around the entrance doorway, which is a significant feature resulting from the current building's massing.
10. Irrespective of the size of the plot, I conclude that the dwelling as proposed would appear out of keeping with the surroundings, as the other houses have broken rooflines and the perception of a smaller scale. The impacts would be highly visible as the Midway frontage is open and the Bowes Road elevation is prominent along a considerable part of its length.
11. The Development Plan is the Elmbridge Core Strategy, July 2011 and the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan, April 2015. Policy CS17 of the former seeks to protect local character, whilst policy DM2 of the latter promotes good urban design principles. The Elmbridge Borough Council April 2012 Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document Companion Guide: Home Extensions, explains the need for the harmony of extensions. The Elmbridge Borough Council April 2012 Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document Companion Guide: Walton on Thames notes the characteristics of the surroundings. The proposal is contrary to the above policies as well as paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework which promotes appropriate design as well as the National Design Guide, October 2019.
12. Both parties agree that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the neighbouring dwellings. However, this does not outweigh the harm that I have found above.

Conclusion

13. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR