

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2020

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/20/3249617

Hazyview, Sandy Lane, Cobham, Surrey KT11 2EL

- 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 & Mrs Gordon Caufield against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. 2019/3612, dated 24 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is a first floor front residential extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposed extension on the appearance of the host dwelling and on the character and appearance of Sandy Lane, and (ii) the effect on the living conditions for the occupiers of 'Tamarisk', the adjoining dwelling, as regards the effect on outlook.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that the appeal property is one of several substantially sized detached houses on a similar building line and with single-storey double garages to their fronts in this section of Sandy Lane. This can be defined as being between Tamarisk to the east of the appeal property, and to the west terminating at Green Acres with its return frontage to Milner Drive. There are some differences in design between the properties in this group, with perhaps the rendering and more obviously flat roofed garage of Tamarisk giving that dwelling a more contemporary appearance.
 4. The appeal scheme seeks to add a first floor extension over much of the existing garage and on the first issue the Council's concern is that the first floor extension would be unduly prominent. It would be perceived as having the effect of moving the house closer to the road. This would be to the detriment of the street scene and harmfully out of keeping with the character of the area.
 5. The two storey elements of the line of houses of which Hazyview forms a part are set fairly well back from Sandy Lane and I consider that this recessing of their bulk from the main views along the road is important to the spacious and verdant character of the area. This character is in part already compromised by the position and bulk of the existing garages but is sufficiently offset by the
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openness at first floor level to maintain this part of Sandy Lane's visual amenity and rural character.

6. In my view, the additional bulk of the first floor addition would in large measure eliminate the necessary subservience of the garage in relation to the house, thereby harmfully altering the host building's appearance in a way that would negate the advantages of the existing set-back in the main front building line. I have had regard to the reduction in size in the amended scheme in this appeal but my assessment is that this has not led to an improvement that would justify a grant of permission.
7. On the second issue, the additional bulk of building at first floor level would be most apparent in the outlook from the large windows of the ground floor study and first floor bedroom of Tamarisk. This would reduce the westward aspect from these rooms and indeed also affect the outlook from the front garden over the neighbouring gardens to the west.
8. At my visit I did not have the opportunity to look out of these windows and visualise the likely impact of the first floor addition. But I am in no doubt that the cumulative impact of the existing garage wall and the additional height needed for the first floor extension would at the very least result in a sense of undue enclosure that would be unneighbourly. I acknowledge that the extension would not breach the 45 degree guideline, but this is primarily an assessment of light, albeit I accept that in some cases it can also be indicative of the effect on outlook.
9. Drawing both main issues together I find that the appeal scheme would harm the appearance of the host building, the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of the occupiers of Tamarisk. There would therefore be conflict with Policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Development Management Plan 2015; the Council's Design and Character SPD (Home Extensions Companion Guide) 2012 and Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.
10. The grounds of appeal have drawn my attention to an approved extension of a similar form at Gramercy House to the west of Milner Road which is considered to have a greater effect than the appeal scheme. However, each proposal must be assessed on its individual merits and the particular context of the site. Having regard to my conclusion as to the adverse effects of the proposal in this appeal and its conflict with the Council's policies, I am not persuaded that the addition to the garage at Gramercy House is of sufficient weight or relevance to change my view.
11. For these reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR