



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 18 November 2020

by Rory MacLeod BA(Hons), MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3635/W/20/3245241

- **6 - 8 Wolsey Road, Ashford, TW15 2RB**

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 The Old Watch Factory Limited against the decision of Spelthorne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01201/FUL, dated 28 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is external alterations to front elevation to provide entrance, modification of 1no. one bedroom duplex unit (flat no G-02) and erection of 2nd floor roof extension to provide an additional 1no. two bedroom unit with associated cycle parking and refuse storage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The site comprises a commercial building previously occupied by The Old Watch Factory Limited, but which has undergone external alterations and conversion works to provide 9 flats. The building has two storeys with a flat roof to the frontage and to its western flank facing 4 Wolsey Road; it is single storey with a pitched roof to the eastern flank facing 10 Wolsey Road.
4. Wolsey Road is otherwise residential in character but mixed in form. There are some single storey bungalows on the opposite side of the road, but two storey houses with pitched roofs predominate. Some have gable fronted roofs with hips to the sides, such as nos. 2 and 4; others have hips to the front and sides, such as nos. 10 and 12. There is variation in external materials to the houses.
5. The appeal building's appearance therefore contrasts with nearby housing. But its massing when viewed from the road fits readily into the street scene, with eaves levels higher than those at adjacent houses, but with a lower overall height. The building is not listed nor subject to any special designation, but it is not unattractive and has a simple form reflective of its previous use.
6. The proposal to introduce two front facing dormers into a second floor pitched roof with gable ends would not be sympathetic to the design of the original building. Whilst dormer windows would align with windows below, the dormers would appear as incongruous elements unrelated to the present form of the building or reflective of other buildings in the street scene.

7. The overall height of the enlarged building would be comparable to that of nearby houses, but the width and massing of development at second floor level would be considerably greater than that of the ridges to adjacent hipped roofs. The rear flat roofed elements to both gable ends would be bulky additions, conspicuous in oblique views across the facing hipped roofs to nos. 4 and 10.
8. The proposal would appear as an obtrusive feature, unsympathetic to the host building, out of keeping with the character of the road and detrimental to the appearance of the street scene. It would thereby conflict with Policy EN1 of the Spelthorne Core Strategy and Policies (2009) which requires developments to have a high standard of design that respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and to the character of the area in which they are situated, paying due regard to matters such as scale, height and proportions. There would similarly be conflict with the Spelthorne Design of Residential Extensions and New Residential Developments SPD (2011) which provides guidance for schemes to be in keeping with and to make a positive contribution to the character of an area.
9. The appellant has pointed out that the neighbouring building at nos. 2 and 4 has rooms in a steeply pitched roof and as it was permitted in 2015 was also assessed against Policy EN1. But the massing of nos. 2 and 4 is considerably less than the appeal proposal, and its hipped pitched roof design complements others nearby. The substantial enlargement of the original development in the post war period does not justify the current proposal which has to be assessed against current policies and which would be contrary to the development plan.

Other Matters

10. The Council has confirmed that it cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply. As such, the tilted balance at Paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework is engaged. The proposal would provide an additional dwelling in a sustainable location, a benefit which would accord with the Government's objective of "*significantly boosting the supply of homes*" set at Paragraph 59 of the Framework. However, Paragraph 127 (c) requires planning decisions to ensure that developments "*are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)*". The building has already provided 9 dwellings in an innovative way towards meeting housing need. The adverse impact on the character of the area arising from the current proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefit of providing a tenth unit, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
11. I have noted the representations from residents, all against the proposal; these do not change my findings on the proposal's merits.

Conclusion

12. The decision on the proposal should not be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rory MacLeod BA(Hons), MRTPI

INSPECTOR