

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 December 2020

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P5870/D/20/3260890

Hurstwood, Great Woodcote Drive, Purley CR83PL

- 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 N Keating against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Sutton.
 - The application, Ref. DM2020/00610, dated 6 April 2020 was refused by notice dated 20 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is a hip to gable front roof extension; hip to gable side roof extensions; single storey rear extension; rear roof dormer extensions; rear single storey and roof accommodation extension. Alterations to wrap house in new brick and clay tile façade.
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Application for Costs

1. An application for costs has been made by Mr & Mrs N Keating against the Council of the London Borough of Sutton. This is the subject of a separate Decision.

Decision

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single storey front and rear extension and conversion of loft space involving alterations to existing roofline, dormer extensions at front and rear and rooflights to front and flank roof slopes at Hurstwood, Great Woodcote Drive, Purley in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. DM2020/00610, dated 6 April 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision;
 - 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. 1219 PL-02B; PL-03A; 1219 PL-03D; PL-04; 1219 PL-04E; PL-05; PL-06A; PL-07A; PL-08; PL-09; PL-10;
 - 3) The development shall be carried out in accordance with samples / details of external materials first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Procedural Matter

3. The grounds of appeal have adopted the Council's description of the appeal scheme in the Notice of Refusal. Although this differs from the application
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description replicated in the final bullet point of the above header, I consider that it is a more suitable summary and I have used it in my decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings which form part of 'The Ridge' Area of Special Local Character ('the ASLC').

Reasons

5. I saw on my visit that the existing dwelling is of a simple design that does not offend the eye but for all that is a somewhat bland and uninspiring building typical of its mid-C20th origins. At best it makes a neutral contribution to the ASLC which is in large measure notable for its large two-storey properties with timber detailing, hung tiling and white rendering together with the large front gardens and their verdant appearance.
6. Having regard to that context, I note that within the main issue in paragraph 4 above, it is only certain elements of the scheme to which the Council objects, as other alterations have been assessed in the Planning Officer's report as being acceptable. The particular concern appears to be with the scale and bulk of the rear roofscape, including the dormers, and with full height glazing, also on the rear elevation.
7. A frequently adopted methodology in development management as regards extensions to existing dwellings is to assess alterations and additions on the basis of their effect on the existing building. For example, whether they are proportionate to the host building and are in sympathy with it as regards design and external materials. More often than not, such an approach is supported by supplementary guidance.
8. However, in my view there are exceptions to this and Hurstwood is a case in point, with on the one hand its existing uninspiring character and on the other the dwelling having the benefit of a generous plot in a part of the ASLC with no immediate contextual design constraints on the western aspect of the site. This enables a more holistic approach with the planning judgement made on the contribution that the 'new' building would make to its setting within the ASLC.
9. The alterations to the front elevation would not be of a scale or wholly non-traditional design likely to draw the eye as a building harmfully out of keeping with the adjoining 'Woodlands' and 'The Smithy'. To the rear, the more contemporary appearance would stand alone as a high quality, cohesive and coherent design and for the most part visible only at distance across the spacious gardens.
10. As a non-designated heritage asset the ASLC merits weight as a material consideration but I do not consider that it has a such a unanimity of building period and style that would preclude a dwelling of relatively modest size with a degree of good quality contemporary design and materials. Nor would there be significant alterations to the footprint of the existing building.
11. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposal would be an improvement on the character and appearance of the existing building and that it would make a positive contribution to the ASLC. There would accordingly be

no harmful conflict with Policies 28 and 30 of the Sutton Local Plan 2018 or with Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. On this basis I consider that the appeal scheme should succeed.

Other Matters

12. I have noted from the officer's report that there are four objections to the proposal from neighbours with the matters raised including the potential for the overlooking of Nos. 2 and 3 High Beeches Road from the glazing in the front elevation and of 7 The Ridge from the rear glazing. However, I agree with the findings in the report that because of the substantial distances between Hurstwood and these buildings there would be no adverse effect on privacy.

Conclusion and Conditions

13. For the reasons explained above, the appeal is allowed. A condition requiring the development to be carried in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and is in the interests of proper planning. A condition requiring the Council's prior approval of external materials will ensure that the development is of a high quality and maintains the visual amenity of the ASLC.
14. The tree officer has suggested a tree protection condition, but this is in pre-commencement form contrary to Government policy and a case has not been made out that it is both relevant and necessary.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR

