The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2021

by C Osgathorp BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/21/3270061
2A Vine Road, East Molesey KT8 9JT

- 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 Martin Pyrgos against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
- The application Ref 2020/2053, dated 13 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2021.
- The development proposed is single-storey rear extension, single-storey front extension incorporating front/side canopy, front bay windows, partial conversion of garage into living space, roof extension incorporating increase in ridge height of 0.85m, rear dormer window, front and side roof lights and alterations to fenestration following demolition of existing conservatory and removal of chimney stack.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single-storey rear extension, single-storey front extension incorporating front/side canopy, front bay windows, partial conversion of garage into living space, roof extension incorporating increase in ridge height of 0.85m, rear dormer window, front and side roof lights and alterations to fenestration following demolition of existing conservatory and removal of chimney stack at 2A Vine Road, East Molesey KT8 9JT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2020/2053, dated 13 August 2020, subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

    2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

    Location plan; 242/AE/10A Rev A; 242/PL/10A Rev A; and, 242/PL/11A Rev A.

    3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be finished in the materials specified on the planning application form and shown on the approved plans.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the description shown on the Council's decision notice in the heading above and my decision as this is more precise than that shown on the planning application form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on (i) the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the East Molesey Kent Town Conservation Area, and (ii) trees.

Reasons

Conservation Area

4. The appeal site is located in the East Molesey Kent Town Conservation Area (the CA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

5. The East Molesey Kent Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals (the CA appraisal) identifies the appeal property and the other dwellings in Vine Road as 'Significant Unlisted Buildings' with townscape merit. The CA appraisal refers, amongst other things, to high survival of large detached Victorian and Edwardian villas. The appeal site is located in Area 2 of the CA appraisal, which states that houses in this part of the CA are almost entirely two storey with occasional use of the roof space for additional accommodation (seen in Vine Road). The CA appraisal states that roofs are otherwise low pitched with strong eaves lines to the roadside but punctuated occasionally with gables providing a variation and interest to the facades. Furthermore, the CA appraisal refers to groups of houses united by their consistent use of materials, such as those to the south side of Vine Road, and other groups distinguished by their consistent scale, form and materials.

6. The Council states that the works to the rear of the house are considered acceptable given their scale and location. Furthermore, the Council indicates that the increase in ridge height is acceptable due to the relationship to the neighbouring properties. I see no reason to take a different view. The Council's concerns principally relate to the proposed front double storey bay window and the composition of the front elevation.

7. I acknowledge that the adjacent Edwardian buildings at Nos 2 and 4 display symmetry, and the existing front elevation of the mid-20th Century appeal property responds to this. However, the CA appraisal does not refer to symmetry as a distinguishing feature that contributes to the significance of the CA. Indeed, I observed that many buildings in the CA have an asymmetrical appearance, and front projections are evident.

8. The appeal property differs from the adjacent historic buildings in terms of its window proportions, detailing and roof form. There is no evidence before me to indicate the reasons for the identification of the appeal property as a Significant Unlisted Building. It has limited architectural detailing, and the ground floor bay windows appear as rather unconvincing pastiche features due to their proportions and small size. The proposed alterations would provide a well-proportioned appearance and I do not consider that its asymmetrical design approach would be harmful to the character and appearance of the building or

the significance of the CA. Whilst the roof pitch of the proposal would be steeper than the existing roof, this would not be significant and the roof would not appear bulky.

9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the CA. It would therefore accord with Policies DM2 and DM12 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan 2015 (the DMP) and Policies CS7 and CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy 2011. Amongst other things, these policies seek high quality design and developments that protect, conserve and enhance the Borough's historic environment. The proposal would also accord with Chapters 12 and 16 of the Framework, which have similar objectives.

Trees

10. The tree adjacent to the rear of No 2 Vine Road and near to the boundary is the closest to the proposed development. The proposed single storey rear extension would not extend closer to this tree than the existing rear conservatory, and so it would not cause harm to the roots of the neighbouring tree. Furthermore, the existing boundary treatment would protect the tree during construction works. The proposed development would not be close to any other trees and would therefore have no adverse effect.

11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to the health of trees. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy DM6 of the DMP which, amongst other things, seeks to adequately protect existing trees including their root systems prior to, during and after the construction process.

Conditions

12. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This is for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty. In order to preserve the character and appearance of the CA I have also imposed a condition requiring the external surfaces of the development to be finished in the materials specified on the planning application form and shown on the approved plans.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

C Osgathorp

INSPECTOR