The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2021

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPl MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/21/3271353
25 Deepdene Wood, Dorking, Surrey RH5 4BQ

- 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 Shanti Duggal against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
- The application Ref. MO/2020/2119/PLAH, dated 19 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 January 2021.
- The development proposed is for demolition of existing attached garage and utilities, erection of two storey side extension with basement and loft conversion.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a large detached multi-level house located within a private residential estate comprising bespoke design dwellings within generous plots. The area is verdant in character, which is accentuated by the spaciousness of the prevailing pattern of development.

4. Deepdene Wood has been identified within the Mole Valley Local Plan (2000) (MVLP) as a Residential Area of Special Character (RASC) with MVLP policy ENV17 stating that in such areas development will only be permitted where it reflects the particular character of the area in terms of density, space about buildings, scale, design, materials and landscaping. The policy stipulates that alterations and extensions to existing buildings will only be permitted if their location, scale and design are in keeping with the character of the area, particularly if seen from the public highway.

5. Whilst the appeal site is quite well screened by mature shrubs and hedging to its boundaries, the area where the extension is proposed is clearly visible from its driveway access. There are a number of properties near to the appeal site that have been extended close to their respective side boundaries, but by virtue of their setback from the road and intervening vegetation they do not appear overly dominant in the locality. Consequently, I consider that the spacing

between the extension and the northern boundary shared with 26 Deepdene Wood would not be uncharacteristic within the area.

6. The forward siting of the proposed front gable feature would however give rise to an uncomfortable duality when viewed against the original dwelling and would visually compete for attention, rendering it as incongruous within the street scene. Due to the double garage door at ground floor level I struggle to see that the proposal would have the appearance of a separate dwelling, nonetheless due to its design and forward position it would appear overly dominant, harmful to the character of the RASC.

7. I appreciate that the appellant has been a long time resident in the area and quite clearly cares about it, and has also been heavily involved in the local residents association. I fully appreciate their desire to modernise the property and I have found in their favour with regard to the proximity of the extension to the side boundary. I also acknowledge that the appeal scheme would negate the need for the permitted detached garage to be constructed within the front garden.

8. However the key matter here is the forward projection beyond that of the existing principal elevation which would result in the extension failing to appear subordinate to the host dwelling. I say this notwithstanding that I agree that the design is more interesting than that permitted by the extant scheme. In respect of the front dormer, the Council haven't included reference to this within its decision notice, however it would appear over-scaled and dominate the roof slope so if I had been so minded to have allowed the appeal, I would have sought a reversion to the original approved design.

9. In summary, I consider that the proposed extension, by reason of its design and layout would give rise to harm to the character and appearance of the RASC. I find the proposal contrary to MVLP policies ENV17, ENV22 and ENV32, as well as the Mole Valley Core Strategy (2009) policy CS14 which in addition to the text referred to above for the former, require all new development to respect and enhance the character of the area in which it is proposed through being appropriate to the site in terms of scale, form and appearance, providing it is not unduly prominent in the immediate locality.

Conclusion

10. Having regard to the above and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR