

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2021

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/21/3270629

Anhedral House, Greenway, Tatsfield, Westerham TN16 2BS

- 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 R Farrow against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application, Ref. TA/2020/1907, dated 16 September 2020 was refused by notice dated 31 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of two storey side, rear extensions and attached garage (Amended plans to 2018/1276) (Retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwellings and its surroundings, in particular the street scene of Greenway.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that Greenway is an unmade road including detached dwellings of individual designs. The combination of the unsurfaced road and mature vegetation give the road a semi-rural character, particularly in the part that includes the appeal dwelling where the houses are more widely spaced.
 4. Figure 1 of the grounds of appeal comprises a photograph which appears to show the whole of the building under construction '*in the late 1990's*' (my emphasis) including a two-storey flat roofed side wing. On this basis the appellant claims the side wing was an original feature, but the planning officer's report says that the permission for the dwelling was given as long ago as 1981.
 5. I have no information as to whether the flat roofed wing was part of that approved design and it is possible that the photograph shows the refurbishment of the dwelling together with an extension being constructed, either without consent or under permitted development rights at that time. If that is the case the Council would be correct to assert that the flat roof element does not form part of the original character of the property.
 6. In any event, the appellants' Figure 2 showing a 2014 sales brochure with the flat roof and the front wall tile hung is supported by currently available Google
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Street View Imagery also dated 2014. And the more important point is that the current proposal seeks retrospective approval for the implementation of further additions under application ref. 2018/1276 granted permission on 14 February 2019, but on a significantly different basis to that approved. The application originally proposed two storey flat roofed side and rear additions to tie in with the then existing side wing physically and stylistically. However, it was only approved on the basis of amended plans for a pitched roof for both the existing and proposed built form and conditioned accordingly.

7. In my view the Council correctly required the amendments to that scheme and was justified in its view that further substantial two storey additions could only be supported if a coherent design for the dwelling as a whole could be achieved, including the addition of a pitched roof to the original flat roof. And indeed, the scheme as built draws the eye and gives further emphasis to the original incongruity of the two-storey side wing when read against the pitched roof of the then main part of the dwelling. Moreover, contrary to the appellants' assessment, despite its primarily rearward location the significantly increased depth and bulk of the flat roofed area is readily apparent in angled views from the road over the front hedge and single storey building forming part of the neighbouring Greenway Cottage.
8. In these views from the public domain, the extension appears as a harmfully bulky and incongruous addition which has a significantly adverse visual impact on the character and appearance of the two-storey pitched roofed remainder of the building and on this part of Greenway. Of less significance but still important is that the rear of the house lacks any form of architectural integrity.
9. Two storey flat roofed buildings can be acceptable, for example those of the Art Deco period and more recently of overtly contemporary design. On a smaller scale, flat roofs can be suitable for single storey extensions of modest depth. But in this case the context is inappropriate and the extension both fails to achieve the necessary subservience and exhibits no semblance of a coherent design that either complements the host building or reads comfortably with its neighbours.
10. For these reasons I conclude that the development is in harmful conflict with Policy CSP18 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008; Policies DP7 & DP12 of the Tandridge District Local Plan: Part 2 – Detailed Policies 2014 and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
11. For the appellants it is argued that they could not afford to complete the development as approved and therefore finished it in a 'cost effective way'. However, even if this point has any credence, I can give it only very limited weight, as the building work was carried out in the full knowledge that it contravened the approved plans and ignored the condition referred to above.
12. For the reasons explained above, I dismiss the appeal.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR