



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 December 2021 by C Glaister BSc (Hons)

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/21/3284752

1 Linden Road, Leatherhead KT22 7JF

- 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 Ms Francesca Bagatti against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2021/0800/PLAH, dated 20 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "Proposed main loft and outrigger mansard dormer, floor plan redesign and all associated works".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. Neither of the descriptions provided for the development make direct reference to the hip-to-half-hip element of the proposal, nor is this element explicitly addressed by either party. There does not appear to be any information submitted for the appeal that provides a clear indication as to why this element has been omitted from the description. This recommendation will consider the development as a whole, including the hip-to-half-hip alteration.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Leatherhead Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The site is within the Leatherhead Conservation Area (CA). The appeal property is one half of a semi-detached pair. Nos 1 and 3 Linden Road have been designed to mirror one another. The main body of the roof is hipped, and there is a gabled element at the front of the property. There are trees between the property and Leret Way, but these provide very little cover when not in leaf. The rear of the property was therefore clearly visible at the time of the site visit. The character and appearance of No 1 contributes positively to the CA.

6. The design of the two dormers would relate poorly to the rest of the dwelling, particularly because of their flat roofs. As a result of their size and the proportion of the roof which they would occupy, they would dominate the rear of the roof. Due to their closeness and the difference in their height, they would relate poorly to one another and appear awkwardly sited as a whole. They would be visible from Leret Way, and cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
7. The hip-to-half-hip element of the development would substantially alter the general symmetry of Nos 1 and 3 at roof level and cause harm to the character and appearance of the pair as a whole. Given the absence of rooflights on the front roof slope of No 3, the two proposed rooflights would exacerbate the visual imbalance that would arise to the roof at the front of Nos 1 and 3. This would result in harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
8. Whilst there is a tree outside the front of the property which serves to obscure some of the building, it does not provide sufficient cover, and this cannot in any case be secured in perpetuity. Although views of the development would be harder to obtain from the pavement directly outside the property, it would nevertheless be visible from the public realm and harm to the character and appearance of the building would still inherently result in a failure to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. The appeal is considered with regard to its own individual merits. Generally, other rooflights in the area are either more evenly and symmetrically spaced across the whole roof, or are sited on the side or rear of the roof. The dormers that can be seen nearby on other properties are designed differently to those proposed. They tend to be smaller, with more space between them, and have different roof forms. As such, other development in the area does not mitigate the harm that would arise.
9. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. The development would be seen from a small section of the CA and consequently the extent of the harm to the heritage asset would be less than substantial in the terms of the Framework. However, there are no substantive public benefits which would outweigh this harm. Providing additional internal space is a personal benefit, which has limited weight. It would not outweigh the harm identified.
10. For these reasons, the development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Leatherhead Conservation Area. It would fail to comply with Policies ENV22 and ENV39 of the Mole Valley Local Plan (October 2000) and Policy CS 14 of The Mole Valley Local Development Framework Core Strategy (October 2009) which together seek to ensure development is appropriate to the site, preserves or enhances and respects the character and appearance of the area. It would also fail to comply with the Framework where it relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

11. Based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Glaister

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

12. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR