



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2022

by H Miles BA(hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/21/3280314

The Chapel, Reigate Road, Leatherhead KT22 8FF

- 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 HWDW against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2020/2197/PLA, dated 1 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of 6no additional roof lights on north and south elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of 6no additional roof lights on north and south elevations at The Chapel, Reigate Road, Leatherhead KT22 8FF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref MO/2020/2197/PLA, dated 1 December 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: jw902-100 Rev L, jw902-108 Rev. Q and jw.902-109 Rev Q.
 - 3) The materials, design and method of opening of the permitted rooflights shall match with those installed in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The host property was historically used as a Chapel. Works to convert it to residential use are in progress. Nevertheless, its original character is evident in the detailing to the elevations and windows, amongst other things. The building also has a prominent roofslope. A single row of rooflights has been installed to each roofslope with 6 pairs to the south and 5 pairs to the north. These windows retain the simple form of the roof. As a whole, these features maintain the striking ecclesiastical appearance to the building. It is agreed between the main parties that the appeal property is not a heritage asset.

4. The size and position of the host building means that it is a conspicuous feature in the surrounding area and its roofslope in particular is visible in private and public views in the surrounding streets.
5. The proposed rooflights would match the style and appearance of those which are already installed. They would be sited in pairs, in line with the existing rooflights. The location of the windows would bring these features closer to Reigate Road, and would introduce windows above the easternmost portion of the roof which is currently unaltered. Nevertheless, given that they replicate the appearance of the existing windows, their minimal numbers and their sensitive positioning, they would not result in an overly cluttered roofslope nor appear discordant. Overall, the appearance of the simple roof form would not be harmfully eroded and the ecclesiastical character of the building would remain evident.
6. I have taken into account the previously dismissed appeal decision¹ and refused application² however I am not satisfied that these schemes are comparable to that before me now. The appeal scheme included windows positioned at a higher level, throughout the roofslope. Whilst the numbers of rooflights in the application scheme were fewer, I have no evidence that they reflected the spacing and sizes of the existing rooflights. Consequently, these decisions do not alter my conclusions.
7. Therefore, the proposed development would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such, in this respect, it would be in accordance with Policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Local Development Framework Core Strategy Adopted October 2009 and Policy ENV22 and ENV23 of the Mole Valley Local Plan Adopted 12th October 2000. Together these seek that the design of new development should respect its setting, including the roofscape and respect and enhance the character and appearance of the locality and buildings that contribute to it.

Other Matters

8. The rooflights would be positioned in a similar location to those that already exist and, although closer, remain some distance from the nearest residential properties. Therefore, there would not be an unacceptable loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers over and above the current situation. Furthermore, taking into account the existing context, the limited size and number of rooflights would not have an unacceptable effect on light pollution.

Conditions

9. I have had regard to the planning conditions that have been suggested by the Council and considered them against the tests in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. I have made such amendments as necessary to comply with those documents.
10. I am attaching the standard implementation condition, and in the interests of certainty a condition to define the plans with which the scheme should accord. A condition requiring the scheme to be built in materials to match the existing rooflights would be necessary to preserve the character and appearance of the area.

¹ APP/C3620/W/19/3222314

² MO/19/2281

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

H Miles

INSPECTOR