



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2022

by Mr Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/21/3281057

58 Tilt Road, COBHAM, KT11 3HQ

- 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 A Lorente against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2021/0373, dated 3 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 27 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is a small, single storey side extension to the front of the existing side single storey element with the internal layout being slightly re-worked, along with new windows to the front elevation, plus a small bay window addition to the existing ground floor living room, and a gabled roof on the main roof as well as the garage area, along with new pitched roofs to the single storey side elements and a new porch roof to the front which covers the new bay window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a small, single storey side extension to the front of the existing side single storey element with the internal layout being slightly re-worked, along with new windows to the front elevation, plus a small bay window addition to the existing ground floor living room, and a gabled roof on the main roof as well as the garage area, along with new pitched roofs to the single storey side elements and a new porch roof to the front which covers the new bay window, at 58 Tilt Road, COBHAM, KT11 3HQ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2021/0373, dated 3 February 2021, and the plans submitted with it, 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: 001 Site Plan; 002 Existing & Proposed House.
 - 3) Before the application of render and the fixing of roof coverings, samples of the wall render and roof slates hereby permitted shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings using the approved samples.
 - 4) The non-deciduous tree standing in the south-east corner of the front garden of this plot shall be protected by strong fencing, the location and type to be previously approved in writing by the local planning authority. The fencing shall be erected in accordance with the approved details before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from
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the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed within any fenced area, and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve the appearance of the Cobham and Tilt Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The CA has historic and architectural significance from the enclosing arrangement of the houses around this side of what appears as a large area of common land on the flood plain of the River Mole, and close to a crossing point. Two directional funnels from the road to the common and the river survive as landscape boundary features, presumably to direct animals to grazing. Spatially, the tight urban edge of the housing enclosing the common is softened by the winding configuration of the road which has the character of a country lane, and by the frontages of the houses which are set back with front garden fences, hedges or walls to varying degrees from the road.
4. Spatially, the balance between the open space and the enclosing urban edge formed by the houses is balanced by the spaces between the houses, their generally 2-storey scale, and the rich variety of their rhythmic forms, plot arrangements, roofscapes and materials. Though these vary from fragmented, short rows of long, narrow plots of Victorian semis to detached, modern houses following a looser-grained development pattern, possibly following substantially earlier plots and boundaries, there is an attractive harmony across the different typologies which contributes to the architectural significance of the CA and its quality of place.
5. The harmony in the townscape of the CA is sensitive to the poor application of materials, and I appreciate the Council's vigilance to protect the significance of its architectural and historic character. However, I saw that houses with white rendered walls and slate roofs are already part of the character of the CA, including the house almost opposite this one, and there are many examples in this same street and elsewhere in the CA. I acknowledge that these materials may be in the minority in the CA, but they are a conspicuous, substantial minority.
6. I recognise that this relatively modern house exhibits the stylistic influence of the late C20. However, I can see no significant architectural synergy between it and its contemporaries. Its flanks are largely white. So too the lower section of its street elevation. There would therefore be no harm to the historic authenticity of the CA from the proposal. The Council recognises the townscape benefits of the gables in the proposal and I saw that the tonal warmth of the bricks and tiles in the CA comes more from the different hues and textures of the natural materials than the more uniform materials on this house.
7. In these circumstances, an additional house of render and slate would not unbalance the equilibrium of the distinctive materials in the CA which contribute to its significance. The overall effect of the proposed development would preserve the appearance of the Cobham and Tilt Conservation Area (CA) to the desirability of the preservation of the character or appearance of which the Act requires that I pay special attention. The proposal would not conflict

with policy CS17 of the Core Strategy 2011 and policies DM2 and DM12 of the Development Management Plan 2015, which reflect the statutory test and which require high quality design that is sensitive to its context, that takes account of materials, and that integrates with locally distinctive townscape.

Conditions and conclusion

8. In addition to the statutory time condition [1], a plans condition [2] is necessary for certainty of what has been approved. The precise shade of the render and the type of slate for the roof also need to be determined, most effectively by a condition [3] for the approval of samples, though this need not bite before the materials are applied.
9. There is a tall, mature tree in the front garden which contributes to the green and soft character of the urban edge here and the landscape significance of the CA. It would not be directly affected by the development but to preserve its health it needs protection during the construction works. Given the condition of the tree, its distance from the development and any likely temporary works, and in the absence of any detailed representations, I cannot see the necessity for the full suite of tree conditions suggested by the Council. I have therefore applied a precautionary condition [4] proportionate to the condition of the tree and the risk to it, to ensure that it is protected before any site clearance begins, and to ensure the protection remains during construction.
10. For the reasons above, and taking account of all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Patrick Whelan

INSPECTOR