



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 June 2022

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/21/3287999

82 The Street, West Horsley KT24 6BE

- 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 Mark Essex against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/P/00913, dated 26 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is a front porch adaptation, two storey side extension, part single-part two storey rear extension and loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a front porch adaptation, two storey side extension, part single-part two storey rear extension and loft conversion at 82 The Street, Leatherhead KT24 6BE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/P/00913, dated 26 April 2021, 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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: SK-100 Rev P4; SK-101 Rev P2.

Procedural Matters

2. In the interests of clarity, I have added the word "extension" to the description of the development to better describe the two-storey side element of the proposal.
3. On my site visit substantial building works to the appeal property were underway. Nevertheless, I have assessed the proposal as it is shown to relate to the existing dwelling on the submitted plans and determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is located on The Street, a main road running through West Horsley. It forms one half of a semi-detached pair, although its plot is wider and larger than its attached neighbour. The front of the appeal site is currently open, however, the house is set back from the road meaning its effect on the street scene is limited.
6. The submitted plans show the existing house had a study at ground floor level, which projected forward past the principal front elevation of the house. To the side there was an existing workshop and carport. The front of the carport was almost flush with the front elevation of the study. Above the study, the first floor was stepped back past the principal front elevation.
7. The proposed side extension, at ground and first floor, would be in line with the principal elevation, rather than flush with the front projection of the former study, like the carport, or set back like the former first floor. The roof line would also be contiguous, which would create a fairly bulky building form.
8. While this means that the proposal would not appear subservient to the existing house, it would not be overly dominant. I understand that it is normally expected for extensions to be designed to be subservient additions, as set out in the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (2018). However, in this case, the resulting front elevation would be more balanced than the existing and would respect the form of the existing house by strengthening the principal elevation. Furthermore, the punctuation at ground floor level of the proposed porch, formally the study, and the existing bay window, which is being retained, would break up the elevation and provide visual interest.
9. Although, the footprint of the overall proposal is relatively large compared to the plans of the existing dwelling, the scale of the additions would not be viewed as one. Each elevation would be proportional to the existing house and would not appear excessive or overbearing due to the design and the size of the plot.
10. Accordingly, for the reasons above, I find the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. As such it would be in accordance with the aims of policies H8 and D1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan and Policy WH2 of the West Horsley Neighbourhood Plan that seek to deliver high quality design that protects the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area.

Other Matters

11. The appeal property and its attached neighbour are similar in their form. However, there are existing differences, such as the appeal property's carport, workshop and larger plot size, which already unbalance the pair to some degree. As such, and given that the proposal would respect the existing dwelling, there would be no harm to the appearance of the pair of dwellings.
12. The southern section of The Street is within the West Horsley Conservation Area (WHCA). At the location of the appeal property the boundary of the WHCA runs down the centre of the road with the buildings to the west being within it and the buildings to the east just outside. The appeal property is located on the east side of The Street and therefore lies just outside.

13. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the WHCA. It is characterised by a diverse collection of buildings, many historical, which differ in their scale, form, and style, reflecting their age. Most of the buildings within the WHCA are set closer to the road than other houses in the area. However, planting in front gardens and soft boundary treatments create a verdant and open character, which is also typical of The Street and West Horsley as a whole. This open character is reinforced by the open fields to the west of The Street and Ripley Lane that also form part of the WHCA. The significance of the WHCA, insofar as it relates to this appeal, is the area's verdant and open character, which is critical to its setting.
14. The appeal site's open frontage and the set back of the existing house contribute positively to this verdant and open character. Due to the set back, the effect of the property on the street scene and the setting of the WHCA is limited, as would be the effect of the proposal. Given this, and that I find the proposal would be proportionate and respect the form of the existing dwelling, I conclude that it would not harm the setting or significance of the WHCA.
15. Concerns have been raised regarding the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupants at No. 80 The Street in respect of outlook, light and privacy, as well as the privacy of occupants of other neighbouring properties. The Council have concluded that the proposal would not give rise to any shading impacts, overbearing effects nor adversely impact the privacy of neighbouring properties. I have no reason to depart from these conclusions.
16. While I understand that some neighbouring properties may have enjoyed more privacy before trees were removed from rear gardens. The planting of mature trees to obstruct views from the proposal are not necessary to allow the appeal and therefore cannot be required.
17. Concerns have also been raised regarding construction activities and the effect works at the appeal property may have on the attached neighbouring property. Understandable though these concerns are, any damage caused to property during construction would be a private matter between the parties involved. Any vibration, noise and disturbance associated with construction, including the parking of construction and delivery vehicles, would be for a temporary period only and, therefore, of very limited weight. Given the relatively moderate scale of the development, it is not necessary, to require approval of any details regarding the activities on site during the construction phase.

Conditions

18. In addition to the standard time limit condition, a plans condition is required in the interests of certainty. In order to protect the character and appearance of the existing house, a condition is necessary to clarify the external materials used in the construction of the extensions to match.

Conclusion

19. With regard to the above, I find that the proposal would be in accordance with the development plan, read as a whole. It has not been demonstrated that there are any material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise in accordance with it.

20. Therefore, the appeal is allowed.

Hannah Guest

INSPECTOR