
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2022 by C Glaister

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/21/3287090

23 Four Wents, Cobham KT11 2NE

- 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 Ali Osman against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2021/2303, dated 22 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "Partial front and rear dormer roof extension to single storey section of main house, additional two storey rear extension to existing double storey section of house addition of a new pitched and new flat roof to facilitate an additional floor to the double storey section of the property together with associated fenestration changes".
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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.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host dwelling, and the surrounding area; and
 - existing trees and hedges

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

4. Most properties along Four Wents are part of a semi-detached pair, and are very similar in appearance. They are set at similar levels, are regularly spaced, and have largely open frontages. Within this context, 23 Four Wents is anomalous. It is a detached pitched-roof bungalow that is linked to a flat-roof two-storey extension by a smaller, substantially glazed, flat-roof two-storey element. There is also another much smaller flat-roof single-storey element directly attached to the original bungalow, and a pitched-roof porch connected to the linking element.
5. The appeal site is larger than those around it, and the ground level is lower. The property is set at an angle to the road, and behind a very tall hedge that

largely obscures the house from public views. There is also extensive vegetation around the property which makes it difficult to view the building as a whole, even within the site.

6. The proposal would increase the size of the main extension, and increase its height together with the linking element. The flat roof of the main extension would be replaced with a pitched roof, and flat-roof dormers would be added to the original bungalow.
7. The property would remain anomalous in its appearance and, with the additional height of the extension, would not be taller than the properties either side of it due to the lower ground level. Whilst the design of the proposal would be unique in comparison to the dwellings around it, it would remain sympathetic to the distinctive nature of the existing property.
8. Although there would be some difference between the appearance of the original dwelling and the more contemporary design of the extensions, the building as a whole would be seen in parts, and the use of a pitched roof over the extension would unify the appearance of the property. Whilst the dormers would be relatively large, they would not be an unusual addition within the overall design of the dwelling.
9. The vegetation around the property that provides screening cannot be relied upon to do so in perpetuity. However, the changes made to the property would remain visually acceptable even if the vegetation were removed.
10. Accordingly, the development would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling, or the surrounding area. It would therefore accord with Policy CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (July 2011) and Policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan (April 2015) (the Development Management Plan) which together seek to ensure development responds to the positive features of individual locations, and preserves or enhances the character of the area. It would also accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and its aim to ensure development adds to the overall quality of the area.
11. Policy CS10 is largely strategic in nature, and not directly relevant to the appeal. However, the proposal would nevertheless accord with the policy's general aim of ensuring development is well designed.
12. The Council have not provided any detail with regard to how the proposal performs against the guidance given in the Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document Companion Guide: Home Extensions (April 2012) (SPD). The SPD is guidance only, and whether or not the extensions would comply with all of the advice provided in the SPD, the development proposed would nevertheless be acceptable with respect to the character and appearance of the area for the reasons given above.

Trees and Hedges

13. The trees on the site, particularly those along the front, add visual interest and make a significant contribution to the character of the area. The trees at the side of the site also help protect the amenity of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties.

14. The arboriculture report is significantly outdated. In the absence of up-to-date arboricultural information, including a scheme for the protection of the trees along the front and side of the site would be required to allow for an informed decision to be made.
15. For the reasons above, the proposal would not currently satisfy the requirements of Policy DM6 of the Development Management Plan which seeks to protect and retain trees which make a significant contribution to the character and amenity of the area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. Although the development would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling, or the surrounding area, this would not mitigate a failure to comply with Policy DM6.
17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Glaister

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. 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