



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2022

by A. Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/W/21/3286321

28 The Island, Thames Ditton KT7 0SH

- 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 Nadia Di Meo against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2021/1044, dated 22 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'replacement house following demolition of the existing'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have also dealt with other appeals at this site¹. Those appeals are the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a parcel of land on the northernmost tip of The Island. It is occupied by a dwelling with associated garden area. A reasonably high number of properties exist within the rest of The Island. These are of a varied scale and design. Despite this variation, the properties within the Island are, in my view, generally of a simple form and roof profile. This minimises their overall bulk.
5. The existing property is reasonably simple in its design and appears to have been altered and extended over time. The position of the first floor accommodation within the dwelling's roofspace is such that its overall bulk and massing is limited. Consequently, the existing property appears modest in its highly prominent setting at the tip of The Island and assimilates with the built form around it.
6. The proposed development would consist of a two-storey replacement dwelling. It features some design cues from the existing property and surrounding area including the use of timber cladding. The footprint of the proposed building

¹ APP/K3605/W/22/3294308 and APP/K3605/W/22/3290242

would be similar to the existing and the maximum height of the proposed development would be no greater than the highest part of the adjoining 27 The Island, featuring a dual-pitched roof with a lowered central valley. However, the eaves height would remain high, and the overall bulk of the property would be significant. The proposed dwelling would be highly visible from multiple public vantage points. This includes the River Thames, the riverside footpath and, to a lesser extent, from Hampton Court Bridge. It would also be visible from multiple private vantage points, including from the riverside properties facing The Island. From these vantage points, the proposed dwelling would appear overly large. Consequently, it would form a discordant feature, out of keeping with the character and appearance of the wider area.

7. I accept that the existing property is in a relatively poor state of repair and features various additions and extensions. However, the existing building is modest in its bulk. Moreover, there is no substantive evidence before me to indicate that the improvement of the site would be inherently reliant on the proposed development and that an alternative, less harmful, scheme could not achieve similar aims.
8. My attention is drawn to several other developments on The Island, including at Nos 10, 13, 14 and 15. These developments have generally increased the size of the original buildings and include contemporary designs. However, the less visually prominent mid-island position of those properties, forming part of a wider row, as opposed to a highly prominent Island tip position, together with their fairly simple overall design, is such that they are not directly comparable with the appeal site.
9. I conclude that the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to the relevant provisions of Policies CS12 and CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (2011) and Policies DM2 and DM13 of Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan (2015). These policies, in summary, seek to achieve a high-quality design in development, which is based on an understanding of local character, and which sympathetically reflects the riverside location. This is in a similar vein to the objectives of the Thames Landscape Strategy (2012), the Elmbridge Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (2012) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

Other Matters

10. Support for the proposed development from a number of neighbours is noted. However, there being third party support for the scheme is not reason in itself to allow development that is unacceptable. This matter is effectively neutral in my determination of the appeal.
11. I note that the building is not listed and does not fall within a conservation area. I also note that the Council does not object to the principle of development and that it would meet a number of other planning policy objectives, including in respect of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. I have no reason to disagree with those matters. Nevertheless, none of those matters, or the lack of harm in respect of flood risk, change my conclusion on the main issue or outweigh the harm identified and the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, taking into account the development plan as a whole and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A. Price

INSPECTOR