



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2023

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/22/3309617

West Hill House, 17 Abbotswood, Guildford GU1 1UX

- 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 and Mrs R Fei against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 22/P/00451, dated 9 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached garage
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a detached garage at West Hill House, 17 Abbotswood, Guildford GU1 1UX in accordance with the terms of the application, 22/P/00451, dated 9 March 2022, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule at the end of this decision.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, and whether it would preserve or enhance the Abbotswood Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a large, detached two-storey house set back from the road. It is located within the Abbotswood Conservation Area (ACA) which relates to a residential garden suburb built in the early 20th century. The detached properties are generally set within relatively spacious and landscaped plots, and West Hill House is one of the original Burlingham houses of an Arts and Craft style. The boundary to the ACA runs along the edge of the appeal site. Beyond which the land slopes down and there is a distinct change in character to the neighbouring properties in Westwood Ho.
4. The appeal property is angled within its plot with the frontage facing towards the gated entrance in the southern corner adjacent to No.18. The remainder and relatively long length of the front boundary is formed of high hedging. As a result views of the property including the front garden area are restricted.
5. The proposed oak timber clad garage is designed with a hipped roof with tiles to match the existing property and would be positioned adjacent to the front boundary. The Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) advises that a garage should be sited to the side or rear of the property, behind the building line. Whilst the proposed garage

would be in a forward position only a small proportion would project in front of the property due to its orientation. I also agree with the appellant that the area proposed for the garage is relatively open and would minimise tree removal. As such, I find the relationship between the garage and the host property would be acceptable.

6. Hedging to the front boundaries is an integral feature of the area and with a height of approximately 3m the existing hedge to West Hill House would predominantly screen the garage. The roof would in part be visible, however the garage has a limited ridgeline at the maximum height and the elevation to the road would be formed of a catslide roof.
7. Garaging to properties in Abbotswood vary in terms of design and siting which to some extent is reflective of the individuality of the properties and the layout of the estate. The appellant has drawn my attention to those located in forward positions. Whilst these are not prevalent, from my observations, in general they do not detract from the spacious and sylvan character of the area.
8. Landscaping is a key element of the estate contributing to its character and the setting of the ACA. Without the existing hedging and other vegetation within the appeal site the garage could be a prominent and intrusive feature. Whilst to accommodate the garage only one tree is to be removed, there would be the loss of other soft landscaping and the southwestern part of the site is denoted on the Abbotswood Conservation Area map as an important group of trees. The retention and integration of vegetation around the garage is therefore essential. As suggested by the appellant further landscaping could be secured by condition, and with conditions to ensure the protection of the existing trees and the retention of the mature hedgerow the appearance and character of the area would be maintained.
9. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be had to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area. The Abbotswood Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP) summarises the character as a mature residential estate comprising large, detached dwellings set back from the road within mature gardens. For the reasons already set out and with the mitigation measures to protect the landscaping I find that the garage would suitably integrate into the site and as a result the character of the ACA would be preserved.
10. The development would therefore accord with Policy D1 of the Guildford Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034, and saved Policies G5, H4 and H8 of the Guildford Local Plan 2003 which amongst other things, seek high quality design and respect for the character and appearance of existing dwellings and surrounding area. The proposal would also accord with the general principles of the SPD, and the protection of heritage assets required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions

11. The Council has suggested a number of planning conditions which I have considered against the relevant guidance. I have imposed the standard time condition and a plans condition for certainty. I also agree in the interest of the character and appearance of the area a materials condition is necessary, however as the details are indicated on the plans and the roof tiles are to

match the existing house samples are not necessary. No new soft or hard boundary treatment is proposed, but a condition is required to maintain the retention of the existing hedge to the front boundary. Whilst an Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report has been prepared, the protection of the hedge and the provision of replacement tree planting are also required. I have therefore imposed a condition requiring full landscaping details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. This is to ensure a complete and co-ordinated approach and as it will secure protection during construction it has to be a pre-commencement condition.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out and having regard to all other matters raised I allow the appeal.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR

Conditions Schedule

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: - 21-1886; 01, 02, 10, 11 and 12.
- 3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the garage hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing property.
- 4 The existing front boundary hedge to Abbotswood shall be retained and shall not be uprooted or felled, topped or lopped or otherwise removed without the previous written consent of the local planning authority.
- 5 No development shall commence until there shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping. The scheme shall include details of all existing trees and hedging on the site, identify those to be retained and set out measures for their protection throughout the course of development and details of replacement trees for those to be removed. The landscaping scheme and protection measures shall be carried out as approved.