



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2023

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/23/3314694

3 Calvert Crescent, Dorking RH4 1NQ

- 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 R Adey against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2022/1569/PLAH, dated 7 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a part two storey, part single storey side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a part two storey, part single storey side and rear extension, at 3 Calvert Crescent, Dorking RH4 1NQ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref MO/2022/1569/PLAH, dated 7 September 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 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 following approved plans: 01 Rev P1, 02 Rev P1, 03 Rev P1, 05 Rev P1, 06 Rev P1, 07 Rev P1, 08 Rev P1, 09 Rev P1, EX-01 Rev P1, EX-02 Rev P1, EX-03 Rev P1, EX-04 Rev P1 and the unnumbered drawing titled "Elevation Two".
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Main issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and locality.

Reasons

3. The host dwelling is located within the Ashcombe Road North Residential Area of Special Character (RASC). In the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, Built Up Areas Character Appraisal, Dorking, North Holmwood and Pixham, 2010, the key characteristics of this area are identified. These include an attractive variety of house designs and generous spacing around properties

with buildings appearing subservient to their landscape setting. I saw at my site visit that the locality is characterised by fairly large detached dwellings of individual design set in relatively large plots, such as that at the appeal site.

4. Relevant to this appeal are Mole Valley Local Plan (LP) 2000, Policies ENV17, ENV22, ENV23 and ENV32, as well as Mole Valley Core Strategy (CS) 2009, Policy CS 14. Taken together and, among other things, these have the following aims. New development should respect and enhance the character of the area and respect the setting, while not being unduly prominent and retaining the character and style of the existing property. In RASCs development should reflect the character of the area in terms of matters such as the space around buildings, scale and design.
5. In the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), Design Guidance for House Extensions 2000, it is advised that extensions which detract from the overall shape and style of the original building will not normally be acceptable. It identifies two ways of extending a dwelling, where the addition is either subordinate, or integrated so that it does not appear as an extension.
6. The host dwelling has a single storey wing that projects from the main two storey part in the broad direction of the access off the highway in Calvert Crescent. The proposed enlargement at first floor level would largely be above this. The footprint would extend towards the south-east at a single storey height but not go beyond the end to the north-east and be set back from the front of the existing main two storey part. There would also be a fairly small increase in the footprint at the rear but the dwelling would project no further to the north-west than at present. These increases would be fairly modest in extent with the spaciousness of the plot not being adversely affected and the space around the dwelling remaining relatively generous.
7. The upper floor part of the addition would be set back from the front of the host dwelling significantly further than that of the single storey part. A ground floor part would join the existing dwelling to the new two storey element. The height of the two storey part would be appreciably less than that of the host dwelling. It would also have a noticeably lesser width and depth than the main body of the existing property.
8. Its size and scale would not therefore be excessive, reflected in the relatively modest 33% increase in floor area. It would also have a fairly similar hipped roof form and proportions, as well as matching materials. In consequence, the development would be a harmonious and sympathetic addition, not detracting from the shape and style of the main body of the existing dwelling, while reflecting it in a subordinate manner.
9. The Council claims that there are no other dwellings in the area with similar linked two storey additions and the development would therefore be at odds with the character of the area. The illustrations showing appropriate methods of extending a dwelling in the SPG do not show linked additions. However, it is indicated in the introduction that the advice therein is not intended to be comprehensive and should not stifle imaginative designs where these accord with the overall policy on extensions.
10. The extension would satisfy the written advice in the SPG for achieving subordination in respect of matters such as the lower roof height and set back in relation to the host property. Moreover, my attention has not been drawn to

any policy or guidance specifically seeking to preclude such development. This way of extending, rather than being unacceptable due to the lack of other examples, would reflect and add to the important diversity of house designs found in the RASC.

11. Views of the extended dwelling from outside the site from public viewpoints would be fairly limited. It would be seen through the access from the road and a nearby public footpath but largely in relation to the side elevation. Because of the above factors, the height of the new first floor part and space around the property, the development would not be unduly prominent and remain subservient to the landscape setting.
12. In all these circumstances, the linked extension would result in the enlarged dwelling respecting and enhancing the character of the RASC, rather than constituting a disjointed and incongruous feature. For the above reasons, it is concluded that there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and locality. The development would comply with the LP and CS policies referred to above. Even if strictly contrary to the SPG, the scheme should not be rejected on this basis given the absence of harm and beneficial effect on the diversity of design found in the RASC.
13. In the National Planning Policy Framework it is indicated that decisions should ensure that developments satisfy a number of considerations. These include that the proposed development should add to the overall quality of the area, as well as being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, which would all be achieved in this case.
14. The enlarged dwelling would be at a significant distance from the adjacent dwelling at Little Friars, as well as being at an appreciably lower level. I saw at my site visit that these factors would prevent the enlarged property being unduly prominent to the neighbouring occupiers, while also preventing any unacceptable impact in relation to matters such as outlook and light. There is no detailed evidence before me to show any significant effect on views of Box Hill from Kepple Road and I note that the Council has raised no objection in this respect.
15. Taking account of all other matters raised and given the absence of harm, it is determined that the appeal succeeds. In reaching this decision I have taken account of the representations made on behalf of the occupiers of Little Friars.
16. A condition specifying the approved plans is necessary to provide certainty. Another requiring the facing materials to match those of the existing dwelling is justified to protect the appearance of the locality.

M Evans

INSPECTOR