



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 March 2023

by P B Jarvis BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/23/3314061

17 Brackenwood Road, St Johns, Woking, GU21 8XF

- 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 Stylianos Rigakis against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
- The application Ref PLAN/22/0878, dated 16 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2022.
- The proposed development is erection of two-storey rear extension, single storey side extension , loft conversion and front façade reconfiguration.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two-storey rear extension, single storey side extension , loft conversion and front façade reconfiguration at 17 Brackenwood Road, St Johns, Woking GU21 8XF, in accordance with the terms of application ref: PLAN/22/0878 dated 16 September 2022 and 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 permission hereby granted shall relate to the following approved plans: 2102/008 (existing elevations), 2102/009 Rev A (existing plans), 2102/010 Rev E (proposed plans), 2102/011 Rev F (proposed elevations), 2102/012 Rev C (proposed roof plans), 2102/013 Rev A (contextual front perspective view) and 02102/014 (rear perspective view).
 - 3) Notwithstanding the material details outlined on the approved plans, no above ground development associated with the development hereby permitted shall commence until details and/or samples and a written specification of the materials to be used in the external elevations have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out and thereafter retained in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no window, dormer window, rooflight, door or other additional openings other than those expressly authorised by this permission shall be formed at first floor level or above in the south-east and north-west elevations (including the roof).

- 5) The windows in the first floor south-east and north-west elevations hereby permitted shall be glazed entirely with obscure glass and non-opening unless the parts of the windows which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the room in which the window is installed. Once installed the window shall be permanently retained in that condition.
- 6) Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2, Part 1 and Classes A, B and C of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any orders amending or re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the flat roof area of the extension hereby approved shall not be used as balcony, roof terrace, sitting out area or similar amenity area nor shall any railings or other means of enclosure be erected on top of or attached to the side of the extension.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a modest semi-detached dwelling set at the end of a cul-de-sac. The plot has a narrow frontage extending out at the rear with a large triangular shaped garden. There is a single flat roofed garage to the side of the dwelling. The immediate street scene is characterised by similar semi-detached dwellings, though a number have been extended, including with two storey front and side extensions. The area is well vegetated with hedging and trees within front garden areas and mature trees which are visible to the rear of the dwellings.
4. The proposed extension would be sited to the side and rear of the existing dwelling and would be of contemporary design. The majority of the extensions would be sited at an angle to the rear and side elevation of the host dwelling, reflecting the triangular shape of the plot and at a slightly lower level. The side extensions would be mainly flat roofed with the two storey element, which would be linked to the first floor of the host dwelling by an obscure glazed link, having a pitched roof.
5. The Council's Design SPD (2015) contains guidance for extensions to residential properties and states, amongst other things, that the additional mass should respect the existing building proportion, symmetry and balance and the size and location of the extension should not compromise the private garden amenity of the dwelling or its neighbours. Roof forms should normally be similar to that of the existing dwellings and the architectural format of the extension is of particular importance if visible from the street. Dormer windows should be subordinate in the roofscape and in keeping with the character of the dwelling. Development that seeks to address climate change through various measures, including layout and use of materials, is also encouraged, as are well considered and carefully composed contemporary approaches to design. The SPD states that it is not intended to promote a slavish copying of existing forms, rather to promote a considered response to the wider area and good contextual design.

6. The front elements of the proposed single storey side element would be readily visible in the immediate street scene at the end of the cul-de-sac but would complement the scale, proportions and external appearance of the host property. They would be read within the context of adjoining properties that have been extended, and in particular in respect of the adjoining property at No. 18, would 'sit comfortably' due to the difference in levels, the appeal site being lower. The overall shape of the footprint of the whole ground floor area would be unusual being at an angle to the host property. However, this building form would make efficient use of the shape of the plot and create a complementary rear 'wing' at slightly lower level with interesting internal courtyard created between the existing and proposed elements of the dwelling.
7. The proposed design of the two storey element, would be more overtly contemporary in its approach, particularly in respect of its angled siting with obscure glazed first floor link and use of external materials. The roof of the two storey extension would be finished in AntraZinc (or similar) standing Seam, Pigmento Red, with anthracite metal fascias and timber boarding to the rear elevations. This modern approach to materials would also be adopted in respect of the proposed rear dormer with large glazed element and replacement rear windows to match the modern styling. The ground floor elevations would be white rendered with large crittall style windows to the rear.
8. The rear dormer would occupy the whole of the roof width, effectively creating a new, flat-roofed, slightly angled shape to the rear roofslope. This would not entirely satisfy the SPD guidance. However, the overall effect would be to create a new modern approach to the rear elevations of the dwelling which the new dormer extension would appear as an integral part.
9. I have noted that a lawful development certificate has been granted for a rear roof dormer though there do not appear to be any specific details of its size and appearance; however, the Council appears to acknowledge that, in respect of the appeal scheme, 'a dormer of this size could potentially be allowed' under permitted development rights though note that it should be of matching materials. Notwithstanding that, the materials now proposed would reflect the overall contemporary approach taken with the rear elements of the proposed scheme and therefore it would appear appropriate in its context.
10. These rear elements would not be readily seen nor prominent within the street scene being set to the rear and partly obscured by the proposed forward sited single storey elements. Overall, I consider the contemporary design approach to be acceptable in the context of the appeal site and its particular characteristics.
11. The Council suggests that the footprint size of the extensions would be over twice that of the existing dwelling and this would appear to be a reasonable estimate. However, whilst noting the substantial size of the additions, due to the overall careful siting, lower roof heights and angled shape that reflects the plot shape, it would nevertheless appear as a proportionate addition in terms of scale.
12. The proposed additions would also sit comfortably within the large plot, the shape of which would allow for the extensions to be sited such that they would not appear overbearing or result in any loss of outlook for adjoining properties. That the external appearance of the extension would, to an extent, contrast with the existing dwelling and its neighbours would not of itself result in harm

and in my view the choice of colour and details of the materials, which could be controlled via condition, would ensure a complementary appearance. Concerns in respect of potential overlooking have been expressed by neighbours to the rear of the site but the proposed extensions would be sited so as to maintain suitable distances between dwellings with relatively generous garden areas between. In addition, the existing vegetation provides some degree of screening which could be enhanced by further tree planting within the appeal site as indicated.

13. Overall, I consider that the proposal represents a well-designed approach that respects and takes advantage of the particular site circumstances providing an interesting and imaginative addition that would complement the host dwelling and its surroundings and the wider street scene.
14. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene. It would thereby accord with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy DPD (2012) which seeks attractive buildings and places, that respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and character of the area in which they are situated paying due regard to the scale, height, proportions, layout, materials and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land. It would also accord overall with the guidance in the Design SPD and its aims and objectives.
15. With regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, I find that the proposal would contribute to achieving well designed places and would be sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

Conclusions

16. The Council has suggested further conditions in addition to the standard conditions to require the use of obscure glazing to side facing windows of the proposed first floor element and to prevent the insertion of further first floor openings, both of which I agree are necessary in the interests of privacy and visual amenity. A condition to prevent the use of the flat-roofed areas for outdoor amenity is also necessary in the interests of the privacy of occupiers of adjoining dwellings. As indicated, details / samples of the external materials to be used should also be required in the interests of the visual appearance of the host dwelling and wider area.
17. I therefore conclude that this appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted.

P Jarvis

INSPECTOR