



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 March 2023

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/23/3315995

1 Greyfriars Drive, Bisley, Woking, GU24 9EE

- 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 Gordon Cowling against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/1016/FFU, dated 29 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 28 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as erection of a part first floor/part two storey side extension, demolition of part of garage and erection of single storey side/rear extension and front porch. Replace conservatory glazed roof to tiled insulated vaulted pitched roof and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to a part first floor/part two storey side extension. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the demolition of part of garage and erection of single storey side/rear extension and front porch. Replace conservatory glazed roof to tiled insulated vaulted pitched roof and internal alterations at 1 Greyfriars Drive, Bisley, Woking, GU24 9EE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/1016/FFU, dated 29 September 2022, and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The demolition of part of garage and erection of single storey side/rear extension; front porch; replacement conservatory roof; and associated internal alterations hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location plan, block plan and Drawing Nos: 1227/P-1, 1227/P-2, 1227/P-3 Revision B and 1227/P-4 Revision D, in-so-far as they are relevant to the development hereby permitted.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the single storey side/rear extension, front porch and replacement conservatory roof hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the character of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site occupies a prominent position within the street scene, adjacent to the junction of Greyfriars Drive and Church Lane. The appeal dwelling fronts onto Greyfriars Drive and comprises one of a pair of detached houses sited on either side of the road junction, which were constructed in the 1960's. The other dwellings in Greyfriars Drive comprise four pairs of uniformly designed semi-detached family houses.
4. Although originally uniformly designed, the detached houses have side extensions projecting towards Church Lane, although one is single storey and the other is two storeys in height and their designs differ. This has diluted their sense of symmetry and uniformity, particularly when viewed from Church Lane and Bisley Green. The single storey side extension to the appeal dwelling is modest in height and its gable end is visually broken with tile hanging and a large window. Beyond this extension is a first-floor window in the side elevation of the original dwelling. As a result of these features the existing appeal dwelling respects the active frontages of the adjacent dwellings that front onto Church Lane.
5. Conversely the side wall of the two-storey extension at 2 Greyfriars Drive (No.2) is devoid of such detailing and is visually stark. It is at odds with this visually active street scene. It is noted that there is a similarly designed dwelling further along Church Lane with a front facing gable and two storey side wing. However, the flank wall of the side wing does not face towards the street scene. Accordingly, rather than set a precedent, these examples of two storey side wings highlight the need to assess each proposal on its individual merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies.
6. Other than these two dwellings this part of Church Lane is primarily characterised by older two storey dwellings, set back from the highway behind modest sized front gardens. As with the dwellings in Greyfriars Drive, there is a sense of consistency and uniformity in the age, form, detailed design and building lines within the groups of dwellings on either side of the junction with Greyfriars Drive.
7. Amongst other things policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2011 – 2028 (CS), seeks to ensure that new development is of high-quality design and respects and enhances the local environment, paying regard to scale, materials, massing, bulk and density.
8. Principles 7.8, 10.1 & 10.3 of the Surrey Heath Borough Council - Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017 (SPD), advises on the use of architectural detailing to create attractive buildings that positively contribute to the character and quality of the area. Extensions should not be over-dominant and should be subordinate and consistent in form, scale and appearance to the host dwelling. Side extensions should not erode the character of the street scene or the local area and should remain sympathetic and subservient to the host dwelling. .
9. Paragraphs 126 & 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (Framework), state that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. New development should be of high-quality design and reflect the distinctive character of the area.

10. The two-storey element of the proposed side extension would not be as wide as the existing two storey front and rear elevations of the host dwelling. It would be set back from the front and rear elevations of the host dwelling and its roof would be hipped away from the street scenes and the rear garden. Also, the windows on the front elevation would be materially smaller than the existing main front facing bedroom window. As a result of these factors the proposed part single/part two storey extension (two storey extension), would be visually subservient to the host dwelling and would not be over-dominant. Its proportions and detailing would be consistent with the host dwelling and the extension would help restore the uniformity of the pair of houses on either side of the road junction.
11. In these respects, the proposal would respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene within Greyfriars Drive. However, I am concerned about the impact of the proposed flank wall of the two storey side extension on the character and appearance of Church Lane and Bisley Green.
12. The flank wall of the proposed two storey extension would have some openings at ground floor level, although they would appear unbalanced and would lack the sense of uniformity in the design of the host dwelling. Of more concern is the absence of windows or detailing at first floor level and the resultant expanse of unrelieved brickwork. As a result, the upper flank wall of the proposed side extension would be visually stark and would have a hard and urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. This impact would be exacerbated by the plain flank wall of the dwelling at No.2.
13. For these reasons, the proposed two storey extension would significantly detract from the active, visually articulate and verdant character and appearance of this part of Church Lane. It would also result in a stark and unattractive entrance to Greyfriars Drive. This harm would outweigh the benefits for the appellant and their family that would result from the proposal. It is also not a matter that could satisfactorily be dealt with by the imposition of conditions.
14. Conversely the proposed garage conversion and extension would be virtually unnoticeable from the street scene and visually discrete within the rear garden environment. The existing conservatory roof forms an uncharacteristic feature when viewed from Church Lane, whereas the proposed solid pitched roof would blend in appropriately with both the host dwelling and the street scene. Accordingly, these aspects of the proposal would respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene.
15. I therefore conclude on the main issue that the proposed two storey extension would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene. Accordingly, it would conflict with CS Policy DM9, SPD Principles 7.8, 10.1 & 10.3 and paragraphs 126 & 130 of the Framework. Conversely the proposed garage extension and partial conversion and new conservatory roof would respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene. Therefore, they would accord with the above policy and advice.

Other matters and conditions

16. It is noted that whilst the appeal site lies within an area of high archaeological interest, the County's Archaeological Officer has raised no concerns. I have no reason to come to a different conclusion.

17. The rear part of the existing garage would only be marginally increased in height and the flat roofed garage extension would not project the rear wall of the host dwelling. In addition, it would be sited several metres away from the dwelling at No.3. The proposed two storey extension would be sited to the northwest and on the opposite side of the host dwelling from No.3. For these reasons the proposal would not result in an unacceptable loss of daylight, sunlight or privacy for the occupiers of No.3.
18. Damage to third party property and associated party wall agreements are a private matter that can be pursued under other legislation. Similarly, detailed construction drawings relating to the proposed garage modifications and extension would be required under other legislation.
19. Finally, the council has suggested the imposition of conditions relating to the use of matching materials and adherence to the submitted drawings, in the event that this appeal is allowed. I agree that both conditions would be necessary to ensure the development respects and blends in appropriately with the host dwelling and in the interests of certainty.

Conclusion

20. Whilst I have found in favour of the Appellant on some matters, my conclusion on the main issue amounts to a compelling reason for dismissing this Appeal, in so far as it relates to the proposed first floor/two storey side extension. However, in view of the acceptability of the garage conversion and extension and the replacement conservatory roof I have considered the possibility of issuing a split decision. As these aspects of the proposal are clearly functionally and physically separate to the proposed part first floor /part two storey side extension, I am able to issue a split decision in this instance.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR