



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16th March 2023

by Megan Thomas K.C. Barrister-at-Law

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Decision date: 20th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/22/3313493

Tall Timbers, Farm Lane, Ashstead, Surrey KT21 1HP

- 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 Driver against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref.MO/2022/1505/PLAH, dated 24 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is side and rear two storey extensions and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for side and rear two storey extensions and associated works at Tall Timbers, Farm Lane, Ashstead, Surrey KT21 1HP, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. MO/2022/1505/PLAH, dated 24 August 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 materials to be used in the construction of external surfaces shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans: Existing Plans PL010, Existing North and South Elevations PL021, Existing West and East Elevations PL020, Proposed Site Plan, Location Plan and Ground Floor Plan PL100, Proposed First Floor Plan and Roof PL101, Proposed West and East Elevations PL200, Proposed North and South Elevations PL201, Proposed Sections PL300 & Proposed Front and Rear Renders PL301.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, in particular whether it would constitute overdevelopment on the appeal site's northern boundary.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is a detached chalet bungalow and garage located on the east side of Farm Lane. It has a flat roofed rear/side single storey extension and a

large well-vegetated rear garden. The bungalow to the north is Little Orchard and the dwelling to the south is Highwood which has the appearance of a two storey dwelling. Ashstead Park is designated as a Historic Park and Garden and is located on the western side of Farm Lane and does not directly adjoin the appeal site.

4. The proposal includes a side and rear two storey extension, a half-hipped roof and an additional front dormer window. It would utilize the lower land level at the rear of the dwelling so that from the front the dwelling would have a single storey appearance and from the rear it would be a two storey dwelling. The height of the existing roof would be retained.
5. The site is located on the east side of Farm Lane in the built-up area of South Ashstead. The Built-up Areas Character Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document (2010) describes Farm Lane as follows:

"On the east side of Ashtead Park are two isolated pockets of residential development, separate from the rest of the built up area. They include Paul's Place and housing fronting Farm Lane, Cherry Orchard, Oak Way and Woodlands Way. These enclaves share many characteristics with the rest of South Ashtead, in terms of individually designed dwellings, with well maintained garden settings including mature trees and hedges. However, lateral separation between dwellings is more variable and the street scenes are, in general, a little less spacious."
6. The above description accorded generally with my observations at my site visit. Tall Timbers stands back from Farm Lane but there is little separation from the dwellings to the north and south.
7. The proposal would introduce a significant depth and mass of new building in the vicinity of the northern boundary of its plot. However, Little Orchard has an existing single storey garage/annex located close to the common boundary. The proposal would extend approximately 4.8m beyond the rear elevation of the nearest section of Little Orchard buildings. The northern corner of the proposal would be about 1289mm from the common boundary at its closest point but the proposed northern elevation would be orientated away from Little Orchard with the separation distance increasing eastwards into the rear garden.
8. The existing northern corner of Tall Timbers is about 1289mm from the common boundary. Whilst the relationship between the two properties would be noticeably different, I do not consider the appearance would be cramped to the detriment of the character of the area or the streetscene. Lateral separation between dwellings is variable and slightly less spacious on Farm Lane than in other character areas in South Ashstead. Highwood, to the south of the appeal site, takes up much of the width of its plot and, like the appeal building, stands back from Farm Lane allowing a more spacious and open field of view, notwithstanding boundary treatments, garden vegetation and street trees.
9. I do not consider the outlook for the occupants of Little Orchard would be unduly overbearing when in their dwelling or garden given the orientation of the proposal and the openness of the rear gardens. The annex at Little Orchard is served by, amongst other things, a window along its northern elevation which is the primary source of light and outlook. The Council do not assert that there would be an unacceptable loss of outlook for the occupants of Little Orchard.

10. The proposed side extension to the south side of Tall Timbers would have a modest impact on the character of the area and a very limited impact on the appearance or amenities of Highwood.
11. Turning to the impact of the proposal on the host dwelling, from the front the proposal would retain the character of a bungalow and would have three pitched roof dormers and half-hips at each end of the roof. Whilst acknowledging that from the rear there would be a significant change I consider that overall the proposal would sufficiently respect the character of the existing dwelling.
12. On this issue, therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would not unduly harm the character or appearance of the host dwelling or surrounding area and it would not be contrary to policies ENV22, ENV23 or ENV32 of the Mole Valley Local Plan (adopted October 2000) or policies in the Ashted Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2026.

Conditions

13. I have considered the imposition of planning conditions in the light of advice in National Planning Practice Guidance. A condition which ties the built development to the approved plan is necessary for the avoidance of doubt. In order to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings, a condition requiring the extension to match the existing materials is necessary.

Conclusion

14. Having taken into account all representations made, for the reasons given above, I allow the appeal and grant planning permission subject to conditions.

Megan Thomas K.C.

INSPECTOR