The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 July 2023

by B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 JULY 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3630/D/23/3315550
Timbers Chase, Ruxbury Road, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9NJ

- 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 & Mrs P Hawksley against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
- The application Ref RU.22/1497, dated 27 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2022.
- The development proposed is described as a 'first floor front extension and conversion of loft into habitable accommodation including 4 dormers.'

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor front extension and conversion of loft into habitable accommodation including 4 dormers at Timbers Chase, Ruxbury Road, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9NJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref RU.22/1497, dated 27 September 2022, and the plans submitted with it, 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: PL.01, PL.02, PL.14, PL.15, PL.16, PL.17.

   3) The external surfaces of the development shall be constructed in those materials set out in drawing PL.16.

Main Issues

2. The appeal site is located within an area of Green Belt. Accordingly, the main issues are whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if so, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances needed to justify the proposal.

Reasons

3. The Framework states that the construction of new buildings is to be regarded as inappropriate development subject to the exceptions which are set out in paragraph 149. Part c) of this paragraph lists the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, as one such exception. This is also set out in Policy EE14 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (2020) (LP).

4. Neither LP Policy EE14 nor the Framework define disproportionate, however LP Policy EE14 points to factors such as existing and proposed floorspace, footprints and changes in mass and bulk.

5. The two storey detached appeal property has been extended since it was originally constructed, through the widening of the front former and a front porch extension. No figures are provided with regards to floorspace, however, these alterations appear to be minor.

6. The two proposed front gables, replacing the front dormer, and the extending to the rear of the roof ridge would result in a greater bulk to the roof form, particularly when viewed from the side. The front gables would also increase the prominence and bulk of the roof from when viewed from the front of the property. However, the proposed development would not increase the ridge height. Unlike the previously refused scheme on this site[1], which also included three front gables, the footprint of the existing dwelling would not increase. There would therefore be no encroachment into the surrounding countryside. As such, there would inevitably be some increase to the bulk and massing of the property.

7. Whilst its appearance, especially from the front would change, the overall scale of the dwelling would not substantially increase, unlike the previously refused scheme. The proposed additions, including the existing minor extension at the front and the additional roof depth at ridge level, would not result in a building of excessive scale nor massing and its original form would remain apparent.

8. In light of the above, I conclude that the development proposed would not comprise a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and would not therefore result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as described in LP Policy EE14 and the Framework.

Conditions

9. A list of suggested conditions has been provided that the Council consider to be appropriate. I have considered these in light of the Planning Practice Guidance and the tests set out in the Framework. For clarity and to ensure compliance with the tests, I have amended some of the suggested wording.

10. In addition to the standard time limit condition, and those stated above, I have imposed a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as this provides certainty.

11. Given that materials such as render are not present on the existing property, a condition to match the existing dwelling is not suitable. Instead, a condition to secure materials as they are set out on drawing PL.16 is appropriate, in order to ensure the materials are suitable for the street scene.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

B Phillips INSPECTOR

[1] Application reference RU.21/1960, appeal dismissed APP/Q3630/D/22/3301965