

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2023

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/23/3323261

Green Mead, Silkmore Lane, West Horsley, Leatherhead, KT24 6JQ

- 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 Mark Woods against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/P/00468, dated 17 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 25 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is front and rear extension, raising of the roof to add a second storey to facilitate rooms in roof with front and rear dormers, new double storey feature entrance, small recessed balcony to the rear and changes to fenestrations and elevation materials.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a 2-bedroom detached bungalow sited between two-storey dwellings and on a lane with houses predominating. The wider village is semi-rural and Silkmore Lane with its verged no pavement, informal make-up; the overall landscape character; and, in general, elevational treatment of its varied buildings would be similarly labelled. Local character is one of broad harmonisation of built form and landscape and the low-key nature of the road as a whole leads to a very pleasing appearance. The proposal is as described above.
 4. There is little or no dispute that the existing bungalow could be altered or redeveloped to become a two-storey dwelling and clearly this would involve some relatively major work. However, such work needs to be well-considered. In this instance my concern lies with the front elevational, roof form and glazing approach which are embodied within the appeal proposals. The dwellings along Silkmore Lane may be varied in style, and in some instances period, but one common theme they almost all have a sense of subtlety. They are not strident, glazing generally balances and does not predominate, roofing is attractively proportioned and generally pitched throughout, and overall they individually and collectively form a fairly gentle semi-rural scene.
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5. Regrettably the appeal proposal would not accord with this genre. The front elevation would be too bold and unbalanced, have seemingly random forward projections, be overly and ill-proportionally glazed and the whole would sit below a roof lacking in grace, strangely punctured by upper parts of the building and dominated by a top-level flat roof element with a roof light. An innocuous existing property would turn into a large dis-jointed structure with no subtle attributes. In terms of the plot itself and the wider scene the appeal proposal would simply be alien and unacceptably jarring on the eye.
6. Policy D1 of the Guildford Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034, Policies H4 and D4 of the Local Plan Development Management Policies (2023) and Policy WH2 of the West Horsley Neighbourhood Plan 2018 are relevant. Taken together, and amongst other matters, the policies seek to secure development which is of high design quality, well proportioned, responsive to distinctive local character, protective or enhancing of the streetscene and local context, and generally sympathetic to existing built environment. I conclude that this proposal would conflict with these policies.

Other matters

7. I understand the Appellant's wish to increase and improve accommodation at this property. I can appreciate that thought has gone selection of a number of the key materials and the attempts made to overcome some of the previous concerns of the Council. I agree that residential amenity is not an issue. I have carefully considered the examples of extensions and dwelling re-modelling drawn to my attention. However, I found that they were not directly comparable due to elevational form, size, siting, wider context, general design or planning policies applicable at the time of consent. To my mind other structures would not create a precedent and, in any event, I must determine the appeal case on its own merits. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
8. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR