
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2023

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 th August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/23/3320764

91 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St Johns, Woking, Surrey, GU21 8UF

- 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 Coward against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2022/0802, dated 19 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension, double storey side extension, demolish existing sun room and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of single storey rear extension, double storey side extension, demolish existing sun room and internal alterations at 91 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St Johns, Woking, Surrey, GU21 8UF, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref PLAN/2022/0802, dated 19 August 2022, and the plans submitted with it, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: JP-15-01-A, JP-15-02, JP-15-03, JP-15-04 and JP-15-05.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building.

Main issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. 91 Hermitage Woods Crescent is a two storey semi detached house in an established residential area. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of similar properties, including mainly two storey semi-detached houses and some bungalows. Many of the houses have been altered and extended since their original construction, including many with two storey side extensions.

4. I consider that the relevant policy in this case is CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy 2027 (the Core Strategy) which requires, among other things, that new development should respect the street scene, having regard to scale, height, proportions and other characteristics of the area.
5. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document *Design* 2015 (the SPD) contains additional detailed guidance on aspects of design and advises that side extensions must maintain rhythm and visual separation and should not result in unbalanced or disproportionate frontages. It further advises that two storey side extensions will not be permitted if they create a terracing effect and that a minimum 1m gap should be retained between the extension and the side boundary.
6. The existing attached garage at No. 91 extends along almost the full depth of the house on the common boundary with No. 89. The proposed two storey extension would follow a similar footprint to the garage at ground floor level, extending into the proposed single storey extension at the rear. The proposed first floor would be constructed on the similar footprint as the existing garage under a catslide roof with the ridge set down and back from the main ridge and incorporating a dormer window at the front.
7. I consider that the proposed side extension is of a scale, height and proportions which are appropriate to both the existing house and the pair of semi-detached houses as a whole and that its form and design would not result in an unacceptable terracing effect in the street scene.
8. Although it is not strictly in accordance with the guidance in the SPD because of its proximity to the boundary, the catslide roof and dormer would break up the front façade and maintain a visual separation at first floor level, thus mitigating any terracing effect apparent in the street scene.
9. I have considered the numerous examples in the street of two storey side extensions, many of which have apparently been in place for many years and predate current policies. Some of these create a terracing effect because of their form and proximity to the side boundary. There are also examples similar to the proposal where the catslide and lower ridge height to the extension create a break in the frontage and reduce the terracing effect.
10. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area and that it is consistent with Core Strategy policy CS21.
11. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

Conditions

12. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council, having regard to the tests set out in the Framework. A condition detailing the plans is necessary to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and for the avoidance of doubt. A condition relating to the materials is necessary in order to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR