

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 August 2023

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 1 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/23/3317905

22 Bowes Road, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 3HS.

- 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 Miss Yui Huang against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2022/2984 dated 28 September 2022 was refused by notice dated 8 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as new entrance, side pergolas attached to the main house and alterations to fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a new entrance, side pergola attached to the main house and alterations to fenestration at 22 Bowes Road, Walton on Thames, KT12 3HS in accordance with the terms of application Ref 2022/2984, dated 28 September 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: Existing location/site plan, 0474 A 0000 01, 0474 A 0001 01, 0474 A 0002 01, 0474 A 0002 02, 0474 A 0003 02, 0474 A 0004 02, 0474 A 0005 01, 0474 A 0006 01, 0474 A 0101 03, 0474 A 0102 03, 0474 A 0103 03, 0474 A 0104 03, 0474 A 0105 01, 0474 A 0106 01 and proposed location/site plan.
 - 3) The materials and finishes to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the proposed extension, pergola and fenestration hereby permitted shall match those of the existing dwelling, other than the proposed wooden louvres and framing.

Preliminary matter

2. The description for the development given on the application form refers to a new entrance and side pergolas attached to the main house. This has caused confusion as the council appear to have interpreted the description as a side and a front pergola and the formation of a new entrance at the side of the property, where new double doors are proposed from the ground floor bedrooms ensuite. Also, at some stage the description for the development
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was changed to include alterations to fenestration, which appears to have been agreed between the main parties.

3. My interpretation is that there is just one side pergola and the new entrance relates to the proposed extension at the front of the dwelling, which is similar in form and appearance to the proposed side pergola. The changes to the fenestration relate to the removal of a window on the east elevation and the replacement of a window with a pair of double doors on the north elevation. I have dealt with the appeal on this basis and in the interests of precision and clarity I refer to the term pergola in the singular in this decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located within a mixed and informal residential area. Bowes Road is primarily characterised by a diverse range of traditionally designed two storey houses, bungalows and chalet bungalows that sit behind front gardens that are enclosed by a combination of hedges, trees, fences and walls. Many of the dwellings have broken front building lines and include features such as projecting integral garages, porches, timber framed front canopies, projecting bay windows and balconies. A number of dwellings have side extensions and attached/ detached garages with a variety of flat, false pitched and fully pitched roofs. The dwellings are constructed from a variety of materials including red and brown roof tiles, red tile hanging, red brick and some exposed timberwork.
6. In contrast to this the appeal property comprises an irregular shaped detached bungalow, with a combination of flat and pitched dark grey tiled roofs, white rendered walls and uncluttered fenestration. Towards the front and on one side of the appeal dwelling is a tall natural coloured timber fence with narrow horizontal slats. The appeal property's generous sized front garden is primarily used for access and parking and is enclosed on either side by a tall fence and white rendered walls. Along the front boundary is a low white rendered wall with a tall hedge sitting behind it. Collectively these features contribute to the dwellings simple and uncluttered contemporary appearance.
7. On either side of the appeal property are detached two storey family houses, which have hipped roofs and are constructed from a mixture of plain tiles, render, red brick and exposed timberwork. One of these dwellings (No.20) also has an attached flat roofed double garage located to the side of it. They similarly have boundary walls, fences, shrubs and trees around most of their boundaries.
8. The front boundary treatments and the adjacent houses partially screen the appeal property from the street scene. However, from the front crossover the site and the side driveway, garage and front elevation of the appeal dwelling are clearly visible. In close proximity to the appeal site and from the junction of Bowes Road and Crutchfield Lane the upper part of the front elevation and the roof of the appeal dwelling are visible above the front boundary hedge.

9. Together and amongst other things policy CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy 2011 (CS) and policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan 2015 (DMP), seek to ensure that new development adds to the quality of the area. Development should respond to the positive features of the locality and integrate sensitively with the local townscape. Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), is consistent with this. It states that new developments should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
10. The Elmbridge Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document – Home Extensions (SPD) advises that extensions should relate appropriately with the host dwelling and harmonise with the street scene. They should respect the proportions and design features of the host dwelling and their roofs should be similar to those of the host dwelling. Dwellings with pitched roofs should not have flat roofed extensions.
11. The proposed new front entrance and side pergola would be simple and uncluttered in form and appearance, with a combination of supporting columns and beams and flat roofs with large oval shaped voids within them. To the front they would have small sections of supporting rendered walls and panels of vertical wooden louvres.
12. The pergola to the side of the house would infill the open gap to the front of the existing projecting attached bedroom. It would be largely screened from the street scene and would have the proportions are a carport. Where it could be seen, it would appear as an attached garden structure. The proposed entrance to the front of the dwelling would appear as a wide, open porch structure, with wooden louver detailing. It would similarly be largely screened from the street scene, with glimpses largely restricted to the immediate area.
13. With both the pergola and new entrance, their ordered and simple form, proportions and palette of materials would respect and add interest to the contemporary appearance of the host dwelling. They would add detailing and interest to the currently almost stark appearance of the dwelling and their flat roofs would be consistent with other flat roofs to the rear and side of the host dwelling. Whilst almost all of the existing dwellings in the immediate area are traditional in their form and design, as stated in paragraph 5 of this decision, their detailing varies considerably. In addition, the proposed palette of materials would be typical of those found within the surrounding area.
14. The proposed changes to the existing fenestration are minor and would not impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the street scene.
15. A consequence of the above factors the proposal would respect the host dwelling and be readily assimilated into the street scene and wider area. This is subject to the use of matching external materials, other than as indicated on the submitted drawings and application form. As suggested by the council this is something that can be satisfactorily secured through the imposition of a condition.
16. In addition to a materials condition, a condition which requires adherence to the submitted drawings would also be necessary in the interests of certainty.

17. For these reasons I conclude that the proposal would respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would comply with CS Policy CS17, DMP Policy DM2, the objectives of the SPD and paragraph 130 of the Framework.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR