The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 October 2023

by Robert Naylor BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/23/3315376
The Hedges, Church Road, Windlesham GU20 6BH

- 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 Steve Jackson against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
- The application Ref 22/0043/FFU, dated 21 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 November 2022.
- The development proposed is a single storey side and part one, part two rear extension with minor internal alterations.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey side and part one, part two rear extension with minor internal alterations at The Hedges, Church Road, Windlesham GU20 6BH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/0043/FFU, dated 21 January 2022, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site is in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) confirms that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The identified fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Council found that the proposal would not represent a disproportional addition to the original dwellinghouse, thus would be an exception under paragraph 149 c) of the Framework, and as such is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Based on the plans before me and my observations on site I see no reason to take a different view.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Church Road, Windlesham Conservation Area (CA) and so harm its significance.

Reasons

4. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) says that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The Framework goes on to state that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. When considering development that affects an asset, the decision-maker should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing its significance and putting the

asset to a viable use consistent with its conservation. It confirms that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset.

5. The appeal site is a locally listed building located on a corner plot within the Church Road, Windlesham CA. From the information in the character appraisal[1] and from my own observations the significance of the CA is made up of informal groupings of predominantly good quality traditional buildings set within a relatively open, rural landscape. The rural setting is enhanced by the spread out and sporadic nature of the existing properties which are generally hidden and screened from public vantage points by trees and hedges and the bends of the roads. The significance of the CA is both historical and architectural.

6. The appeal site is a late 19th Century red brick two storey property, which occupies a prominent corner location, albeit views are limited to glimpses only, due to the presence of a well-established green boundary and the neighbouring property at the rear. The proposal would provide a single storey side and part single and part double storey rear extension, replacing an existing single storey conservatory. The proposal would be finished in render with the two-storey element containing a low-pitched standing seam zinc roof providing a modern juxtaposition to the traditional host property.

7. The Framework indicates that new development should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. It is acknowledged that the proposal would provide a modern addition to the side and the rear of the host property, however the proportions, materials and design, whilst contrasting, translate well to those of the host property and the surrounding CA, providing a respectful development within the sensitive historic environment.

8. In regard to the side extension, I consider that it would not appear out of scale with the original building and the design is fairly simple and would integrate well with the existing appearance of the host property.

9. With regard to the part single and part double storey rear extension this would be more visible from nearby views outside the site, including the public footpath to the north. The design of the proposal including the low-pitched roof would be a deviation from the character and appearance of the appeal property by virtue of its form, roof profile and materials. Nevertheless, render material can be found in the surrounding CA, and the use of the grey zinc at roof level would be complementary to the existing grey roof tiles at the host property. As such, this particular design whilst different would achieve an appropriate level of subordination in a manner that would also be sympathetic to both the appeal site and surrounding CA.

10. In view of the positioning and size of the proposals relative to the plot size and distance from neighbouring buildings, I am satisfied that the massing arising from the proposal would be acceptable in visual terms, not appearing visually intrusive or overly prominent within its context. The scheme provides a respectful, well-considered design response to the site, albeit with a contemporary design and alternative fenestration and roof features and façade treatments. Furthermore, I am satisfied that the appropriate materials, as

[1] Surrey Heath Borough Council Church Road, Windlesham Conservation Area Character Appraisal, March 2000

shown in the plans, could be secured through suitably worded planning conditions.

11. Consequently, I would conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the house itself, a non-designated heritage asset or the conservation area thus preserving its significance. As such, it is consistent with policy DM17 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2011-2028, adopted February 2012 which seeks to promote the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings. The proposal would also be consistent with the Framework which also seeks high standards of design that would conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Conditions

12. I have imposed the standard time condition and a condition to ensure the development is in accordance with the approved plans in the interests of certainty. I have imposed conditions in respect to the material specifications and details retaining the existing openings in the rear wall in order to ensure an acceptable visual effect in the interests of preserving the historic assets.

Conclusion

13. The appeal scheme would accord with the development plan, when read as a whole and the Framework. Having considered all material considerations and other relevant matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal is allowed.

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF 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: 062-001-PL00; 062-010-PL00; 62-011-PL00; 062-030-PL02; 062-031-PL02; 062-020-PL03 and 062-040-PL00.

3) Prior to commencement of above ground works, details (including samples) of the facing materials to be used for the external surfaces of the building hereby approved which include but not limited to the roof cladding, wall facing materials and cladding, window glass, door and window frames, decorative features, rainwater goods and paving where appropriate shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

4) The existing rear wall on the ground floor and first floor shall be retained, without further openings than those proposed on the approved plans 062-020 PL03, and shall be permanently retained as such for the lifetime of the development.

END OF SCHEDULE