



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2023

by Luke Simpson BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M2270/D/23/3326537

32 Beulah Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2NR

- 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 Tom Iverson against the decision of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00709/FULL, dated 14 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 15 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension, proposed three storey side extension and proposed dormer window to existing side roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey rear extension, proposed three storey side extension and proposed dormer window to existing side roof at 32 Beulah Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2NR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/00709/FULL, dated 14 March 2023, 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: Block Plan; Site Location Plan; Existing Elevations (C2202008 D1); Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan (C2202008 D2); Existing Ground Floor Plan (C2202008 D3); Existing First Floor Plan (C2202008 D4); Existing Second Floor Plan (C2202008 D5); Proposed Elevations (C2202008 D6); Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan (C2202008 D7); Proposed Ground Floor Plan (C2202008 D8); Proposed First Floor Plan (C2202008 D9); Proposed Second Floor Plan (C2202008 D10).
 - 3) Other than the flat felt roof, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within the St James area of the Tunbridge Wells CA. Under section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I am obliged to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4. The CA is relatively vast and encompasses much of Tunbridge Wells. It predominantly derives its significance from the proliferation of attractive historic architecture which is composed within typically linear street layouts and interspersed with large areas of parkland.
5. 32 Beulah Road (the Host Property) is a three-storey (with additional accommodation in the roof) semi-detached dwelling with an attractive Victorian appearance. The building currently assimilates well with neighbouring residential development in terms of its layout and proportions when perceived within the street scene. It therefore makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.
6. The parts of the proposed development which would be visible within the street-scene include the side extension and part of the proposed dormer window. The side extension would extend up to the boundary of the appeal site. As such, the gap between the Host Property and the neighbouring dwelling at 30 Beulah Road would be reduced. However, there would be a gap retained between the neighbouring flank elevation and the development. In addition, Beulah Road slopes downwards towards the north-west. As a result, the eaves of No 30 would sit well above the roof of the extension when viewed in the street-scene. This eliminates any prospect of a terracing effect, even taking into account the extensive depth of the proposal.
7. In more general terms the side extension would be subservient to the host property. Indeed, the visual effect of its scale would be reduced given that it would be partially set below street level. The design of the side extension matches that of the existing dwelling. The proposal is similar in scale and proportion to many other similar extensions in the immediately surrounding area, with many properties on Beulah Road and surrounding area extended in a similar manner. The dormer window would be barely visible in the street scene and is not an uncommon feature of the area. The other elements of the proposal are all well-designed and respect the character and scale of the host property.
8. As such, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA and it would not result in any harm to heritage assets within the terms expressed within the National Planning Policy Framework. It therefore complies with Local Plan¹ Policies EN1 and EN5, which seek to ensure that new development respects local character and preserves the character of Conservation Areas, respectively.
9. I note that the SPD² states that a 1 metre separation distance between an extension and the property boundary is 'normally desirable'. However, this terminology allows some flexibility. In this case, given the topography of the site and the subservient scale of the proposal, a shorter separation distance is acceptable. As such, there would not be a conflict with the SPD.

Conditions

10. I am imposing the standard householder conditions, as advocated by the government's Planning Practice Guidance. These are to ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with the approved plans, and that the external materials used reflect those of the dwelling itself.

¹ Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (Adopted March 2006)

² Alterations & Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (June 2006)

11. An additional condition requiring submission of details of specific materials is not required, given that condition 3 is sufficient to ensure that the materials match the existing dwelling.

Conclusion

12. The proposed development complies with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations raised which indicate a decision other than in accordance with it. As such, the appeal is allowed.

Luke Simpson BSc MSc MRTPI

INSPECTOR