



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 December 2023

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/23/3331089

32 Blair Avenue, Esher, Surrey KT10 8BQ

- 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 Pavel Sandu against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 2023/2001 dated 14 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension to create one additional bedroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for first floor side extension to create one additional bedroom at 32 Blair Avenue, Esher, Surrey KT10 8BQ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref: 2023/2001 dated 14 July 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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: TP(01)01 REV A; TP(01)02 REV A; TP(10)01 REV A; TP(10)02 REV A; TP (10)12 REV A; TP(11)10 REV A Existing Elevations; TP(11)10 REV A Proposed Elevations; TP(01)03 REV B; TP(10)11 REV B.

Preliminary Matters

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was revised in December 2023. Although some of the paragraph numbering has changed, I do not consider that there are any material changes in the Framework, pertinent to this appeal proposal. It is not therefore necessary to seek the views of the Appellant or the Council on the revised Framework.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and on the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling on the south side of Blair Avenue, to the west of the junction with Cranbrook Drive and within a predominantly residential area. The surrounding area has a mix of semi-detached dwellings as well as short terraces and there are a number of bungalows interspersed with 2 storey dwellings.
5. The property has recently been extended with a part two / part single storey rear and side extension, together with other alterations. This proposal seeks to extend with a first floor side addition over part of the ground floor side extension.
6. The proposed first floor extension would be set back from the from the line of the ground floor side extension and from the original front projecting bay. It would also be set in from the side of the ground floor extension and the roof ridge would be set down from the main roof ridge. As a result of the proposed siting in relation to the house as extended and taking into account its modest scale and design to reflect the design and form of the existing property, I consider it would form a subordinate addition to the existing dwelling, as extended.
7. The Council has specifically referred to its Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document Companion Guide: Home Extensions 2012 (SPD) and its guidance to avoid a terracing effect from side extensions. Given the siting in relation to the side boundary of the appeal site as well as the properties in Cranbrook Drive, I agree with the Council that there would be no terracing effect. Furthermore, given its modest scale I do not consider that it would materially detract from the openness of the street scene.
8. The Council has also referred to the SPD in relation to single or two storey side extensions; in respect of semi-detached properties the SPD advises that *an extension which is subordinate to the existing building is advisable*. The SPD specifically advises that it is preferable to set the extension back *from the front wall of the house, which helps to reflect the secondary role of the extension...* This set back would be achieved with the design of the proposed extension.
9. The symmetry with the adjoining 'half' of the semi-detached pair is no longer present given the extensions already permitted and undertaken. However, given the set back of the proposed first floor extension, the original forward projecting bays under hipped roofs to both houses would, visually in the street scene, remain the principal elements and thus some of the symmetry of the semi-detached pair would be retained.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed extension would respect the character and appearance of the existing property as well as of the local area. There would be no conflict with Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy 2011, Policy DM2 of the Development Management Plan 2015, the SPD and the Framework, in particular Section 12, all of which, amongst other matters, seek a high quality of design which respects the local context.

11. The Council has drawn my attention to an extract from an Inspector's decision where that Inspector dismissed an earlier proposal under the Council's reference 2021/2263. Neither the Council nor the Appellant has provided me with a copy of that appeal decision, but the Appellant has provided me with comparison drawings of the current proposal and that earlier proposal. On the basis of these plans, I am satisfied that the proposal before me is materially different to the one that was refused permission by the Council and dismissed at appeal.
12. The Appellant has also drawn my attention to extensions which have been permitted at No 27 Cranbrook Drive, as well as other side extensions in the local area. However, each decision must be assessed on its individual merits, which has been the basis of my assessment in this case.

Conditions

13. In terms of conditions, I agree with the Council that the materials should match the existing to respect the character and appearance of the existing property and of the local area, and the approved plans should be listed for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of good planning.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR