
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 July 2024

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/24/3343744

Richmond, Waverley Avenue, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 4NW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Michael Sloan against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00327/HOU.
 - The development proposed is a single storey front extension following removal of the current storm porch to form additional habitable accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey front extension following removal of the current storm porch to form additional habitable accommodation at Richmond, Waverley Avenue, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 4NW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/00327/HOU, subject to the following condition[s]:
 - 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: WSD/581-001, WSD/581-002, WSD/581-014, WSD/581-013, WSD/581-012, WSD/581-011, WSD/581-010 and WSD/581-009.
 - 3) 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 on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and that of the local area, with reference to the North Fleet Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. The Appeal dwelling is a substantial detached house in English vernacular style, with rendered elevations and timber windows, with a terracotta tiled roof. The original house has been significantly and sensitively extended in the past and the scale of the dwelling does not lend itself to appearing as a cottage, but rather a house of some status set within a generous garden. There is a driveway leading to a rear parking area and the main entrance to the appeal dwelling, which is the existing storm porch on the rear elevation.

4. The appeal dwelling is located on a private road made up of similarly scaled detached houses on generous plots with mature trees. These houses exhibit a variety of architectural expressions, but that appear to mainly reflect an English vernacular, Georgian or arts and crafts influence in their design. There are also generous gaps between houses and set-backs from the road. Collectively this lends itself to a cohesive and verdant street scape.
5. The Council have recognised the heritage value of the area through the designation of the CA. The North Fleet Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals Supplementary Planning Document (2008) (the CASPD) sets out the significance of the CA rests mainly in its late 19th and early 20th Century development as a residential area of large, detached houses on spacious plots with mature trees and a sylvan quality. As such, the appeal dwelling contributes to this significance.
6. In line with the duty imposed on me by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have given considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
7. The existing storm porch on the rear elevation of the appeal dwelling is the main entrance to the appeal dwelling. This is a small porch, which, although it belies the scale of the appeal dwelling, does reflect, in its simplicity, the English vernacular style of the appeal dwelling house. However, the understated storm porch does not read as a main entrance to a house of this scale, rather it reads as a secondary entrance.
8. As such, there is not currently an entrance that reflects the scale of the appeal dwelling, or appears to reflect in its design, the status and visual announcement of main entrances found in original English vernacular houses of scale. Being at the rear of the property and given the scale of surrounding properties, the porch is little overlooked from outside the appeal plot.
9. The proposal would replace the existing storm porch with a larger single storey extension. Similar to the existing storm porch this would be centrally positioned on the original and main element of the house, reflecting in its position and design the fenestration of the appeal dwelling. The roof of the proposal would be flat, with a low fully glazed roof light to its centre, with a decorative metalwork frieze that would engage with the existing string course on the rear elevation of the appeal dwelling. Otherwise, the render, brick work and window materials proposed would match that of the existing building.
10. However, the proposed architectural expression would also add decorative detailing and features that would announce the entrance as being the main entrance to that of a house of scale. The design chosen appears to draw on traditional English architectural exemplars, particularly where later additions were added to late medieval hall houses or larger farmhouses to create houses of status. As such, the proposal appears to be in keeping with the English architecture exemplars of the local area and that of the appeal dwelling and would not, therefore, appear as overly ostentatious and would complement the architectural design of the appeal dwelling.
11. The proposal would only appear in limited views afforded of the rear of the appeal dwelling, but in these views would appear as a subordinate and contextually appropriate addition to the appeal dwelling. As such, the proposal

would not detract from the contribution that the appeal dwelling and the local streetscape make to the significance of the CA.

12. Whilst the Council has raised concerns that, should the proposal be allowed, it could set a precedent that could result in proposals for other damaging additions and alterations to other properties in the local area, I have considered the proposal on its own merits, which is a key tenet of the planning system. I have not therefore accorded this any significant weight in my considerations.
13. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would not result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. As such the proposal would accord with saved Policy GEN1 of the Hart Local Plan (2006), Policy NBE8 and Policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (2020) and Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). These collectively seek development, including extensions, that achieve a high quality of design, contribute to the overall appearance of the local area and conserve or enhance heritage assets.

Conditions

14. Along with the standard condition for the time limit on implementation of the development, in the interests of design quality I have included conditions requiring compliance with approved plans and the use of matching materials to existing.

Conclusion

15. The appeal is allowed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR