



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 May 2025

by J Moore BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/25/3361364

8 Pembroke Gardens, Woking, Surrey GU22 7DR

- 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 White House Building Construction against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2024/0714.
 - The development proposed was originally described as: proposed side extension over garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of a first-floor side extension over garage and fenestration alterations at 8 Pembroke Gardens, Woking, Surrey GU22 7DR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PLAN/2024/0714, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos:
 - Location Plan
 - AJD-P05-B-001 REV C Existing Ground Floor Plans
 - AJD-P05-B-002 REV C Existing First Floor Plans
 - AJD-P05-B-003 REV C Existing Roof Plans
 - AJD-P05-B-004 REV C Existing Elevations
 - AJD-P05-B-005 REV C Proposed Ground Floor Plans
 - AJD-P05-B-006 REV B Proposed First Floor Plans
 - AJD-P05-B-007 REV B Proposed Roof Plans
 - AJD-P05-B-008 REV B Proposed Elevations
 - AJD-P05-B-009 REV B Existing Site Plan
 - AJD-P05-B-0010 REV A Proposed Site Plan
 - 3) The external materials of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) No site clearance or development related works shall take place until details of tree protection measures have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include a Tree Protection Plan and pre-commencement meeting and shall be in accordance with British Standard BS 5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations (or an equivalent British Standard if replaced). The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 5) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no windows/dormer windows, rooflights, doors or other openings other than those expressly authorised by this permission shall be constructed on the south-east elevation of the development.

Preliminary Matters

2. Although the appeal form indicates the description of development has not been changed, a different description has been entered which is the same as that stated in the decision notice. However, it is clear from the plans and accompanying information that the proposal includes fenestration alterations to the rear elevation of the existing property, and that the Council dealt with the proposal on this basis. I have therefore used the description as it appears on the appeal form and decision notice in my formal decision above, as I consider this to be more precise, while the banner heading details the proposal as originally described on the planning application form.
3. The appeal was made under the Householder Appeals Service. After the appeal was made, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024, with further amendments made in February 2025 which do not constitute a change to policy. The revisions do not have a material bearing on the matters at dispute between the parties in this case. I have therefore found it unnecessary to seek further comments as neither party would be prejudiced by my consideration of the revised Framework.
4. At my visit, construction works were in progress to the westerly elevation of the appeal property. For the avoidance of doubt, this structure does not appear on the existing or proposed plans before me. I have considered the application as submitted.

Main Issue

5. The Council raises no concerns about the proposed fenestration alterations within the rear elevation of the host property (No 8), and I find no reason to consider otherwise. The dispute concerns the proposed extension. Therefore, having regard to all the evidence before me, the main issue is the effect of the proposed extension upon the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

6. Pembroke Gardens is a cul-de-sac comprising eight two storey detached dwellings (Nos 1-8 consecutive), with Nos 1 and 8 located at the entrance of the cul-de sac. The evidence indicates that the development was constructed in the 1970s and all dwellings share common design features. However, Nos 7 and 8 are of a different design, such that they have a rectangular footprint, wider frontages, and hipped roofs with their ridgelines parallel to the road. Nos 1-6 have a less regular footprint which is deeper on one side, and as such they have a more complex roofscape.
7. As originally built, all properties included single storey side garaging with flat roofs, attached to one side and of such a width to accommodate two vehicles side by side. This arrangement contributes to an open character at the upper level between built forms. However, No 7 benefits from a first-floor extension above its

original garaging, following a permission granted in 1982. This extension is flat and flush to the upper main elevation, aligned with the flank of the garaging below, and an extended hipped roof form. The proposal before me seeks to largely replicate this first-floor extension. While I appreciate that the extension at No 7 was permitted some time ago in the context of the prevailing policy circumstances at that time, the fact of the matter is that it exists, and therefore forms part of the character and appearance of the street.

8. Although the width of single storey garaging provides visual separation at the upper level between properties, this clearly varies with the siting and arrangement of built form within the cul-de-sac. Nos 1-4 are closely sited on the opposite side of the road to Nos 7 and 8, which are also closely sited. Nos 4-6 have irregular plot shapes and do not share the same building lines, due to their siting at the head of the cul-de-sac. Consequently, the open character of the street as a whole is heavily influenced by the cul-de-sac form. Due to their rectangular footprints and hipped roofs, together with their contained presence within one side of the street, Nos 7 and 8 display a less open character than the remaining properties in the street.
9. For the reasons above, I do not find the open character and appearance of the street and the properties within it to be as 'uniform' as the Council suggests. The fact that No 7's first-floor extension maintains separation towards its side boundary and towards No 6 at the head of the cul-de-sac does not alter my findings.
10. The Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document 2015 (SPD) provides guidance on residential extensions. In terms of the streetscape, the SPD sets out that side extensions are often the most convenient but can have a significant impact on the character of streets; and that significant extensions to the street façade will usually be resisted where there is a well-established building line. For side extensions, it further sets out that these can have a significant effect on the character and appearance of a property and that of the street scene; and that proposals must maintain rhythm and visual separation. The SPD also sets out that two storey extensions which leave little or no space between adjoining dwellings will not be permitted if they create a terracing effect. The Council clearly found that the proposed extension would not result in a terracing effect, and I find no reason to conder otherwise.
11. The proposed first-floor extension would be similar to that at No 7, such that it would be flat and flush to the main elevation; and the hipped roof form of the main part of the dwelling would be extended above, with the same ridgeline and angle. However, it would be set in from the flank of the garaging below by about 1.2m. This would create some degree of subservience to the host property.
12. The proposal would introduce mass above the garaging to No 8 and would extend the upper building line. The scale and proportions of proposed openings would be consistent with the rhythm of existing openings within the main elevation of the dwelling. The proposed extension would appear consistent with the host property and with that of its immediate neighbour at No 7, due to its siting, scale and design. These factors would be a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the street.
13. Due to its siting and scale, the proposed extension would be about 3.4m distant from the side boundary of the plot towards No 7. This distance is well above and

greater than the minimum 1m distance sought in the SPD. The appeal site is in a low-density area, where the SPD seeks a greater gap, albeit unspecified. In such terms, it seems to me that the acceptability of the size of a gap is a matter of planning judgement.

14. Overall, I find that the proposed extension would not undermine the open character of the street, even if the reduction in the gap at the upper level is significant. It seems to me that the existing first-floor extension to the immediate neighbour at No 7 is materially significant in this case, when taken together with the fact that Nos 7 and 8 have a distinctively different character than the other properties within the street. Therefore, and drawing all the above together, I find the proposed extension to be acceptable.
15. The appellant draws my attention to certain examples which in the appellant's view, have been considered acceptable by the Council and are similar to that proposed and in a similar low-density area. The examples are at nearby Heathside Gardens, which is within a short distance of the appeal site towards the northeast and comprises two storey, detached dwellings with double width side garaging.
16. The examples I saw are not strictly comparable as they are set back from the main elevation with a subordinate roofscape. Even so, they appear to align with the flanking elevation, and thus maintain the gap to the side boundary, resulting in a similar reduction in visual separation at the upper level as that proposed. It seems to me that the neighbouring examples at Nos 3 and 5 Heathside Gardens appear to have a similar, if not narrower gap between built form and/or side boundaries as that between Nos 7 and 8 Pembroke Gardens. Overall, I did not find these examples to harm the otherwise open nature of the street.
17. However, the detailed circumstances which led to these examples are not before me, which limits the weight I could attach to this matter. Therefore, on the evidence before me, the examples only serve to demonstrate that extensions over double garaging which align with the flanking elevations of a host property are not uncommon in the wider area.
18. For the reasons above, I therefore conclude that the proposed extension would not harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area. In such circumstances, the proposal accords with Policies CS21 and CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012. Taken together, and among other things, these policies seek to ensure that development proposals respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and character of the area in which they are situated, and provide a positive benefit to townscape character, taking account of various factors.

Other Matters

19. The evidence indicates that trees within the rear garden of the appeal site are the subject of a tree protection order (Ref TPO/0003/2008). The appellant advises that no protected trees are to be removed by the development, and the proposed works would be within the footprint of the existing development such that there would be no new foundations or digging that may impact on their root protection areas (RPAs). However, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate this, nor to demonstrate that any other construction related activities would not take place within their RPAs, including the storage of materials. In any event, the Council's evidence indicates that this matter could be controlled by a suitable condition, and I find no reason to consider otherwise.

20. The evidence before me indicates that the Council found no reason to consider that the proposal would adversely affect the setting of the nearby Hockering Conservation Area (CA), the boundary of which runs along the rear of the appeal site. Due to the scale, siting and nature of the proposal, and having visited the CA, I find no reason to consider otherwise.

Conditions

21. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council, comments from the appellant including pre-commencement, and in light of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). For clarity, precision and to ensure compliance with the PPG, I have undertaken some amendments, editing and rationalisation. Where conditions require compliance prior to the commencement of development, the appellant has provided their written agreement to their terms as per section 100ZA of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
22. Conditions 1 and 2 respectively impose a time limit for commencement and require the development to be completed in accordance with the approved plans. These conditions are necessary in the interests of clarity, precision and enforceability. A condition is necessary to ensure that the materials used in the development match that of the existing building, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.
23. I have imposed a pre-commencement condition to ensure that suitable tree protection measures are agreed and in place prior to any construction activity, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area and biodiversity. A condition restricting permitted development rights with regard to windows or other openings within the south-easterly elevation of the proposed extension is justified, reasonable and necessary in the interests of the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal accords with the development plan read as a whole. Therefore, the appeal should be allowed, and permission should be granted, subject to the conditions I have set out.

J Moore

INSPECTOR