



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 March 2026

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc MCIH MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/25/3374992

10 French Gardens, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 2AJ

- 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 & Mrs Green against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/1542.
 - The development proposed is for a two-storey side/rear extension, roof extension incorporating front dormer window, new side porch, rooflights and alterations to fenestration following demolition of existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. For clarity and brevity, I have used the description of development given on the Council's decision notice.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area, including the host dwelling; and,
 - the nearby trees.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is located in an established residential area to one side of a cul-de-sac known as French Gardens. The immediate surrounding area, including the semi-detached appeal property at No 10 French Gardens, is typified by pairs of single-storey bungalows with garages that have generous landscaped gardens to the front and rear, which help to create a sense of spaciousness and rhythm within the surrounding built form.
5. The proposal is to construct a two-storey side and rear extension with a dormer, side porch with new fenestration at No 10 in similar materials to the host dwelling.

6. I acknowledge the two-storey dwellings that line French Gardens close to the junction with Hogshill Lane and that other bungalows in the cul-de-sac have extensions or permissions for extensions to the front or side¹, including Nos 5 and 6. However, these schemes appear to be of some vintage, which are likely to have been permitted under an different development plan from the proposal before me. Therefore, given that I have limited details of these schemes, some of which are located on a different section of French Gardens altogether, I have considered the proposed development on its own planning merits.
7. As such, the development would be located in an area where the principle of development is accepted. Nevertheless, while noting the Elmbridge Design Code SPD (2024) (EDC) that is relevant to the village of Cobham, and notwithstanding the set back of the scheme to the front, the modest dormer and the limited views of the 'cat slide' to the rear, the fact remains that the dominant two-storey appearance of the development would negate the symmetry of the semi-detached host dwelling. As a result, the proposal would be a highly prominent and unbalanced addition to the semi-detached host dwelling.
8. Moreover, the scheme would have an extensive hipped roofscape and a side extension that would be of equal height to the host ridge line that would extend across most of the width of the plot to the front. Consequently, the overall bulk, mass and height of the proposal would erode the sense of spaciousness in this part of French Gardens.
9. I conclude therefore, that the proposal would not only be at odds with the character of the host dwelling, but also with the low-key appearance of the built form in the immediate surrounding area in this specific part of French Gardens.
10. It follows then, that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and the host dwelling. Subsequently, the development would be contrary to Policies CS10 and CS17 of the Elmbridge Borough Council Core Strategy (2011) (CS), Policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan, Development Management Plan (2015) (ELP), as supported by the EDC, which say, amongst other things, that all new development should achieve high quality design.

Trees

11. The appeal property has an ample garden to the rear which is surrounded by a number of mature trees growing in the neighbouring residential gardens.
12. An arboricultural report was submitted by the appellant subsequent to the Council's determination. Following my site inspection, while the appeal is to be dismissed on other grounds, I am satisfied that the nearby trees to the side and rear of the host garden could be protected during and after construction of the scheme by the imposition of a suitable condition.
13. Hence, in respect of the effect of the development on the surrounding trees, the proposal would accord with Policy DM6 of the ELP; which says that development should not result in loss of, damage to, trees and hedgerows that are, or are capable of, making a significant contribution to the character or amenity of the area.

¹ 2012/3919 and 2010/0989

Other Matters

14. My attention has been drawn to the condition of the older style property and the appellant's aspiration to construct a contemporary family dwelling in a sustainable location; a scheme which is highly regarded by a number of neighbouring occupiers. However, even when considered in combination, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have found above.

Conclusions

15. Whilst I have found, subject to condition, that nearby trees could be protected from the effects of the new development, the proposal would nevertheless harm the character and appearance of the area, including the host dwelling.
16. Therefore, as the proposed development conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole, and as there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J E Jolly

INSPECTOR