



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2026

by **E Everitt BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/25/3376464

Grange House, The Street, Betchworth, Surrey RH3 7DJ

- 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 Ashdown against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref is MO/2025/02127.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing garage to provide annex accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of existing garage to provide annex accommodation at Grange House, The Street, Betchworth, Surrey RH3 7DJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref MO/2025/02127, 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 J005292-DD-01 Site Location Plan, J005292-DD-06 As Proposed Site Block Plan, J005292-DD-07 Rev A As Proposed Site Plan, J005292-DD-08 Rev A As Proposed Floor Plans, J005292-DD-09 Rev A As Proposed Elevations, J005292-DD-10 Rev A As Proposed 3D Views and J005292-DD-11 Rev A As Proposed Sections.
 - 3) The building hereby permitted shall not be used other than as part of the dwelling known as Grange House.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed development is tantamount to a self-contained dwelling; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

Whether or not a self-contained dwelling

3. The appeal property comprises a detached dwelling with outbuildings, including a garage. The appeal proposal is the conversion of the garage into annex accommodation. The annex would be solely for family use and would remain part of the main house.

4. The annex would be physically separate from the main house, with a separate front door, and it would provide facilities to support day-to-day living, including kitchen and bathroom facilities. Notwithstanding this, there is no proposal for a separate dwelling before me. Indeed, there is no evidence before me to suggest that the building is intended to be anything other than an annex, having regard to the location close to the main house, the familial relationship between the occupiers and the shared garden space, access and parking.
5. Nevertheless, a suitably worded condition would provide certainty that the annex remains part of the main house.
6. For these reasons, I conclude that, in this case, the annex would not be occupied as a separate self-contained dwelling. In this regard, the proposal accords with the relevant provisions of Policies EN3 and EN4 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2039 (adopted 2024) (the Local Plan). In summary, these policies seek development of a scale and design appropriate to its location, and which responds to the prevailing pattern of development.

Character and appearance

7. The main house on the appeal site is two storeys in height with a hipped roof. Gable forms above the entrance porch and a first-floor window add visual interest to the property. The property is located within an area which is residential in character, comprising buildings of varying scale, form and design. This includes a number of smaller-scale buildings, including outbuildings such as the garage on the appeal site, and buildings with dormer windows. This variety contributes towards a pleasant sense of contrast and variation in the built form and roofscape of the surrounding area.
8. The appeal proposal would alter the hipped roof of the existing garage through the introduction of two dormer windows on the front roofslope. The dormers would be modest in scale, appearing subservient to the existing building and enabling a significant proportion of the roofslope to remain unaltered. The proposed dormers would be sympathetic to the character of the existing dwelling with their pitched roofs responding to the detailing on the main house, in particular by echoing the gable forms present on its front elevation. In this regard, the proposed development would complement, rather than dominating, the existing dwelling.
9. Furthermore, taking into account the varied roofscape in the surrounding area, notably including examples of dormers, the proposal would not appear as an incongruous addition to the area.
10. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposed development would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. As such, it complies with the relevant provisions of Policies EN3 and EN4 of the Local Plan. Among other things, these policies seek development which is of an acceptable scale and design and respects, contributes to and enhances the local environment and character.

Other Matters

11. Given my findings above, the Council's comments with regard to the effect of the proposal on the character of the surrounding area, were the proposal to constitute a self-contained dwelling, are not determinative.

Conditions

12. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions against the tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where necessary, I have amended the wording of conditions for clarity, and to ensure compliance with the tests of both precision and enforceability.
13. In addition to requiring commencement within the relevant statutory period, I have imposed a condition requiring adherence to the approved plans. These conditions are imposed for certainty. The condition requiring adherence to the approved plans is also necessary in the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the property.
14. I have imposed a condition requiring that the annex is used only as part of the main house, amending the wording suggested by the Council on the basis that the annex is intended to provide living accommodation rather than be used for purposes ancillary to the use of the main house. This condition is necessary for certainty and to ensure that the annex is used as assessed above.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the proposal complies with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be allowed.

E Everitt

INSPECTOR