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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 January 2019

by **Andrew Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 February 2019

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**Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/18/3213944**

**The Coach House, Inholms Lane, North Holmwood RH5 4DW**

- 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 Charlotte Ling against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
  - The application Ref MO/2018/0905/PLA, dated 21 May 2018, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2018.
  - The development proposed is the conversion of brick built outbuilding to provide ancillary accommodation; revised application to MO/2018/0423/PLA.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of brick built outbuilding to provide ancillary accommodation; revised application to MO/2018/0423/PLA at The Coach House, Inholms Lane, North Holmwood RH5 4DW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref MO/2018/0905/PLA, dated 21 May 2018, 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 the following approved plans: 000, 100, 101, 200 and 201.
  - 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.
  - 4) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling on the application site, and specifically shall not be used as a separate unit of residential accommodation without a prior express grant of planning permission.

### Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Charlotte Ling against Mole Valley District Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

### Preliminary matter

3. During the processing of the application, the main parties discussed whether the description should be changed to propose the conversion of the building into an independent dwelling. However the application was determined by the

Council on the basis of the appellant's original description, to use the building in an ancillary manner alongside the existing dwelling known as The Coach House. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

### **Main Issue**

4. The main issues are:

- a) The effect on the character and appearance of the area, and
- b) The effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 19 Russet Way.

### **Reasons**

#### *Character and appearance*

5. The appeal site stands at the edge of the village of North Holmwood, facing out towards the countryside. The area has a rural character derived from its countryside location, mature trees and hedges; although the site is bound to the north and west by modern residential development. The building to which the appeal relates is a former coach house that has been used in recent years as an outbuilding associated with the dwelling at the site.
6. The building has received alterations in the past, which include an unsympathetic bulky box dormer on the rear roof slope. However in other respects it retains some original character, with wide over-sailing barge boards and decorative clay ridge tiles. These details match those used on the main house, giving the outbuilding and the dwelling visual coherence.
7. The appeal proposal would remove the large flat roofed box dormer from the rear of the building. Although the footprint of the building would be extended at the rear, its form would be improved by extending out predominantly at ground floor with two rear facing gable projections. These are of a design and form that would complement the existing building. The view of the outbuilding from the driveway, or where glimpsed from the road, would be greatly improved in this respect, owing to the loss of the first floor box dormer extension. Additional first floor accommodation would be carefully arranged between the two rearward gables. This would be clad in lead, which would make it visually recessive, and would be set back between the two gables with their painted barge boards.
8. The front elevation of the building would be little altered, retaining its current scale and clear ancillary relationship with the main dwelling. A further extension would be formed to the north, set back and down from the existing building. Although this would bring the outbuilding closer to the main dwelling, the extension would be appropriately designed and scaled for the context, leaving a sufficient gap between the buildings to ensure that they do not appear cramped.
9. Concerns have been raised about the impact of an increased area for the parking of cars associated with the proposed works. I am satisfied that the area set out on the site plan would not be harmful, and would be commensurate with the size of the dwelling and plot.
10. In summary, the scale and character of the existing building would be retained, maintaining its appearance as a former coach house associated with the main dwelling on the site. This would not harm the character or appearance of the

existing buildings, or wider area, and as such would be in accordance with Policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted 2009 (CS), Policies ENV22, ENV23 and ENV24 of the Mole Valley Local Plan adopted 2000 (LP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which together seek to ensure that development proposals respect the character of an area in terms of scale, form and spacing.

#### *Living conditions*

11. The proposal would bring the building closer to the boundary with the neighbouring property to the west, known as No 19 Russet Way. However the form of the building at the rear would be improved by removing the bulky first floor dormer extension and replacing it with a pair of gable projections. This would relate well to the design of the existing building and also lessen the bulk of the building at the rear, by removing its prominent first floor flat roof part. The existing first floor extension incorporates windows that face directly out towards the neighbour. These would be removed as part of the proposal, and the replacement extensions would not have rear facing windows at first floor level.
12. No 19 Russet Way is orientated with its rear elevation and openings facing towards the road, not towards the appeal property. The elevation facing the appeal property is a blank gable. The neighbouring property sits in a large plot and is screened from the appeal property by a mature hedged boundary. The appellant has suggested that the hedge would be retained as part of the work. This would be preferable as it would maintain the generally verdant character of the plot. However, the replacement of the hedge with a fence in this location would not necessarily be harmful as it would be difficult to see from a public vantage point, and it would match the existing fence boundary along the road frontage of the neighbouring plot. Either the retention of the hedge, or its replacement with a fence, would safeguard the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property.
13. In summary, the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property to the west, No 19 Russet Way. It would therefore accord with Policy ENV22 of the LP and the Framework, which seeks to ensure that development proposals do not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

#### **Conditions**

14. I have had regard to the planning conditions that have been suggested by the Council and considered them against the tests in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. I have imposed a materials condition, to safeguard the character of the existing dwelling and area, and a condition specifying the approved plans as this provides certainty. I have also imposed a condition, suggested by the Council, to clarify the use of the building subject of the appeal. I consider this to meet the tests set out within the Framework. The Council also suggested a condition to remove permitted development rights for various further alterations to the property. I have considered this against paragraph 53 of the Framework, and do not consider this to be necessary on the basis of the large size of the plot and distance from other properties. Accordingly I have not imposed this condition.

**Conclusion**

15. For the reasons above, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

*Andrew Tucker*

INSPECTOR