

APP/14/01043 – 16 Bath Road, Emsworth

Two separate applications have been submitted for similar works. This application and the development at 19 Bath Road (APP/14/01049) pose similar issues.

The work at this property involves the conversion of the attic space, the provision of a front porch and redesigned rear extension. The building's contribution to the character of the area lies primarily in its public presence to the Harbour. The rear of the property is screened from public view by the surrounding development.

To achieve the desired headroom an ungainly and bulky dormer addition is proposed. In my view this will be a detrimental change but not one that will directly harm the character of the conservation area. The other consequential change is the provision of roof lights in the primary front elevation.

The adopted Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan for Emsworth highlights how the cumulative effect of relatively modest changes (often exempt from planning control) can erode and begin to undermine the character of the conservation area to its overall detriment. When determining planning applications the local planning authority has a duty to ensure the resulting impact of the development either preserves (neutral impact) or enhances the character and appearance of the area.

With some notable historic exceptions the present roofscape facing onto Bath Road remains largely unpunctuated. This is a positive attribute. There needs to be consistency in dealing with such proposals. The overall objective should be to minimise the punctuation of the front roofslope to a minimum and where acceptable use a well designed and placed unit to mitigate the impact. As a general rule rooflights should be limited to those essential for the utilisation of the space rather than those that are non-essential but desirable. In this vein, ideally I would wish to see the number of rooflights reduced to the two essential ones lighting the stair and bedroom. The rooflight to the dressing room being desirable rather than essential. In its favour the scheme does exhibit some conscious design in the placement and design of unit, which is absent from the proposal at 19 Bath Road.

The porch, picking up on the design of the adjacent property and rear extension are acceptable. Within the conservation area, painted timber rather than upvc is sought but given the scale of development and what currently exists this is not something I can insist upon.

Summary

The proposals as set out would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The dormer itself, while bulky and ungainly, will have negligible impact due to its location and surrounding development. My concern relates to the attendant changes. I feel there is scope to satisfactorily mitigate this for which I have provided detailed suggestions above.

John Townsend
Conservation Consultant

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