

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2016

by Grahame Gould BA MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 3rd November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/W/16/3154168

14 Limecroft Close, Ewell KT19 9RE

- 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 Mr Mario Dolcezza against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00014/FLH, dated 31 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is hip to gable loft conversion and rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the appeal property (No 14) and the streetscene in Limecroft Close.

Reasons

3. No 14 is a semi-detached house with a hipped roof, which has been extended to the side and rear at ground floor level. The development would involve the creation of a gable ended roof and the insertion of a near full width, flat roofed, rear dormer. As part of the roof enlargement No 14's ridge line would be raised by around 400mm¹.
4. The dormer would be a comparatively large and box like addition and would result in No 14 having a top heavy appearance. This top heavy appearance would be accentuated by the fact that in seeking to provide an acceptable level of internal headroom the dormer's roof would project above the ridge line currently shared by Nos 14 and 16. Taking the foregoing factors into account I find that the dormer, in particular, would be an incongruous addition that would be harmful to the character and appearance of No 14.
5. No 14 is in a street that comprises 14 pairs of semi-detached properties of a similar design, dating from the same period, and hipped roofs are a characteristic feature of this street. I recognise that Limecroft Close is not subject to a conservation area designation or any other character or appearance designations. While some properties in this street have had two storey side extensions or been subject to roof alterations, none of those

¹ Dimension taken from paragraph 4.1.4 of the appellant's appeal statement

additions have involved the raising of a property's ridge line. Not only would the introduction of a gable ended roof be at odds with the prevailing roof type found in Limecroft Close, but Nos 14 and 16 would become an unbalanced pair of properties at roof level, given the difference in ridge lines that they would have. The resulting stepped ridge would be readily apparent in the streetscene and I consider the presence of the shared chimney stack would not provide any meaningful visual relief. I therefore find that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the local streetscene. I am also of the view that cladding the gable end with tiles, as opposed to using a render finish as per the details shown on the application drawings, would not make this an acceptable form of development.

6. A number of roof alterations in other nearby streets have been drawn to my attention and I viewed a number of these. However, I have not been made aware of the circumstances that gave rise to those developments, for instance whether they have benefited from the use of deemed permitted development rights or express planning permissions, and I thus do not know how comparable the circumstances of those developments were. However, each case must be considered on its individual merits and that is what I have done in this instance. While I recognise that the permitted development rights might allow for some alterations to be made to the roof of this property, they do not apply in this instance because the ridge level would be raised. Accordingly the permitted development rights regime does not assist the appellant in this instance.
7. The absence of any objections from the occupiers of neighbouring properties does not persuade me that this would be an appropriate form of development in this location.
8. For the reason given above I conclude that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of both No 14 and the streetscene and could not be made to be acceptable by the imposition of reasonable planning conditions, including any with the purpose of safeguarding the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. There would therefore be conflict with Policies DM9 and DM10 of the Council's Development Management Policies Document of 2015 in that the development would not be of a good design and would fail to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, including the distinctive roof form found in Limecroft Close's streetscene. As the appearance of the development would be unacceptable there would also be conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework, most particularly paragraphs 17 (the fourth core planning principle), 56 and 58.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Grahame Gould

INSPECTOR