
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

by Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

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

Decision date: 4 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/W/16/3165326

2 Ruxley Lane, West Ewell KT19 0JA

- 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 Pergent Patel against the decision of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00861/FUL, dated 8 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as a loft conversion proposal. New staircase access from the side of the building directly into loft space with a separate entrance, utilizing as a separate dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the appearance of the host building and the character of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. While the front of the site is part of a shopping parade where the shop fronts are part of a coherent architectural and commercial frontage, and where external stairways do not appear as a characteristic architectural element, the proposed stairway, where it would come close to the frontage line, would be screened by the gate. While it would be visible in the gap between the terraces, it would be largely overshadowed by the close setting of the two terrace flanks, and it would be set back a substantial distance from the street. These factors would diminish its incongruence as an architectural element and reduce its conspicuity in the street scene to the degree where there would be no harm to the appearance of the host building or to the character of the surrounding area from its presence.
 4. Turning to the proposed dormer, while I note its roof would be set down from the ridge of the main roof over the terrace, its width would appear comparable to the outriggers below it which would disrupt the order of mass in the rear elevation and make the dormer appear disproportionately great in the roofscape of the terrace. The position of the front wall of the dormer so close to the eaves of the main roof would make it appear over dominant as an element of townscape. While the resulting imbalance would not be prominent in the street scene, it would nonetheless be visible from the areas behind the terrace and from neighbouring dwellings and gardens.
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5. While the roofscapes of the neighbouring buildings include a variety of dormer types including hipped, gabled and flat roofs, they share a common attribute of generally appearing subordinate to the slopes of the roofs in which they sit. In this context, the combined effect of the width of the proposed dormer, with its proximity to the eaves of the building, would make it appear uncharacteristically dominant. It would be at odds with the scale of the prevailing roof development in the surrounding buildings and thereby harmful to the balance and order of roofscape development in the area.
6. Accordingly, and for the reasons above, I conclude that the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the appearance of the host building and on the character of the surrounding area. It would be in conflict with Policies DM9 and DM10 of the Council's Development Management Policies Document 2015 which identify roof forms as an essential element contributing to character and local distinctiveness and require proposals to make a positive contribution to the Borough's visual character and appearance.
7. Roofscape is an important element of building which can influence the attractiveness of a place. In this regard the proposal would conflict too with the objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework¹, and with the Planning Practice Guidance², which advises that development should seek to promote character in townscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development.

Conclusion

8. While the proposed development would provide the modest benefit of one additional dwelling to local housing supply, this would be outweighed by its harm to the appearance of the host building and to the character of the surrounding area. For the reasons given, and taking account of all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Patrick Whelan

INSPECTOR

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 58

² Planning Practice Guidance, paragraph 007 Reference ID: 26-007-20140306
