
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 April 2017

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/17/3169311
5 Glebe Road, Ashted, KT21 2NU

- 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 & Mrs Gerard Fyson against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2016/1595/PLAH, dated 4 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 29 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of ground and first floor rear extension and alterations to the roof to facilitate the creation of rooms in the roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I use the Council's description of development which is more concise than the application forms; I note the Appellants also use this on the appeal form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on, firstly, the character and appearance of the locality and, secondly, on the living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an extended semi-detached older 'cottage style' property of pleasing proportions and elevations. It lies within a residential area with a variety of house styles which are generally semi-detached and come together to form an area of established character and aesthetic quality. The proposal is as described above and would embody raising the roof by 600mm along with the use of crown roof, mansard/dormer and roof light arrangements with the ground floor protruding extension work being flat roofed and a first floor extension across part of the rear elevation having a pitched roof form up to the main crown. The scheme would provide for substantially increased living space, 2 new bedrooms, a study and a further bathroom.

Character and appearance

5. The nature of frontages does vary along this street and in the case of the appeal property, the semi-detached form has lost some of its symmetry through existing extension works. No 7 to the south west has a side extension which is set back from the front elevation but includes a ridge height which is
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greater than the original. The Appellants have taken this ridge height as their cue for works to the appeal property. However, even if one were to see this as a precedent, there are a number of other considerations which to my mind would indicate very different propositions. No 7's works are set back and equal to about half the width of the front elevation whereas this scheme would see about two thirds of the ridge raised and this would be all be undertaken along the same plane as the original dwelling. Furthermore the appeal scheme would embody three strangely positioned, over-high, roof lights which would look ill at ease.

6. To the rear of the cited example the roof continues as a pitched form. In the case of the appeal scheme there would be a very odd arrangement of an alien crown roof form and an uncharacteristic mansard/dormer projection; the shape and scale of the cottage's simple pitched roof would be largely lost. The ungainly arrangement at upper level would be compounded by excessive works lower down. Whilst the rear works would generally not be on public view it is not unreasonable to seek to secure good design and a suitable harmony and scale of development at a dwelling which is presently of some merit in its own right and as part of a wider group.
7. This overwhelming extension work would be excessive, jarring on the eye and would not represent good quality design for a change to the appeal property or its wider context. It would lack suitable subservience and detract from the aesthetic qualities of the original building and neighbouring properties.
8. Taken together, Policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy and Saved Policy ENV32 of the Mole Valley Local Plan (LP) call for, amongst other matters, a quality design sympathetic to, and in scale with, the style and character of the original building and its wider setting. I conclude that the appeal scheme would run contrary to these policies.

Living conditions

9. The extension work by reason of its scale, height and positioning would result in a very unfortunate bulk of building on view from, and closely alongside, the neighbouring properties. The sense from the two adjoining rear gardens in particular would be of undue dominance from the planned works and this would be uncomfortable. The scheme would be out of place and jarring to neighbours' eyes on a stretch where visual subtlety presently satisfactorily prevails. As with any urban area there is a degree of mutual overlooking of garden spaces from first floor windows albeit angles, levels and screening from some lower projections, generally provides for some private spots as in this instance. Unfortunately the proposed bedroom in the roof mansard/dormer would by reason of height and position figuratively and literally add a new level to the actual and the perceived overlooking of the adjacent garden to the south west. As a consequence neighbours' amenity would unacceptably decrease.
10. LP Saved Policies ENV22 and ENV32, taken together and amongst other matters, seek to prevent harm to the amenities of neighbours. I conclude that this scheme would conflict with these policies for the reasons I have given.

Other matters

11. I sympathise with the wish to extend this family dwelling. I could see that there was some variation in the form of extensions which have taken place locally, albeit I do not know the full circumstances of all this work. However, I

could see few if any providing accommodation of the type proposed at roof level to the rear along the immediate stretch of this side of the street. Those extensions which I could view did generally appear to be suitably subordinate in nature. Some roof lights were evident on the street frontage but their use was minimal and generally positioned suitably within the context of the whole roof slope. In any event, notwithstanding works to other homes, I have to determine this case on its own merits. I would agree that the orientation and position of the planned works would mean that there would be no undue loss of daylight or sunlight for neighbours. I can see that thought has gone into matching materials and I fully appreciate that much of the scheme is not visible from publically accessible vantage points. I note the wiliness to raise the chimney despite the depiction on the submitted plans. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellants but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issues identified above.

12. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered; the Council's policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within the Framework.

Overall conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the locality and on living conditions for neighbours. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR