
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2017

by Oliver Blower MA (T&CP)

a person appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 27 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/17/3172445

32 Bowes Road, Walton-on-Thames KT12 3HX

- 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 Mrs Cath Marcus against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/3852, dated 23 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is for a rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I note that the drawings titled 'Existing Elevations' and 'Existing Plans' show a gable roof to the dwelling. I observed at the site visit, however, that the host building has a hipped roof at present.
3. Nonetheless, I note that the Council granted a lawful development certificate (Ref. 2016/3280) for a hip to gable roof extension to each side of the appeal building. Thus I will assess the proposed rear dormer in the context of the approved hip to gable roof extension.

Main Issue

4. The Council has raised no objections to the effect of the proposed dormer on the living conditions of neighbours. Based on my own observations I find no reason to disagree. I therefore consider the one main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and area.

Reasons

5. The appeal relates to a modestly proportioned two-storey detached house with a hipped roof (with approval for a hip to gable extension). It has a two-storey rear extension with a part hipped part crown roof, which is lower than the ridge height of the main roof. The immediate area is characterised by a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows with hipped or gabled roofs. I note that many of the nearby properties have been extended, to the front, rear or side, and several have dormer extensions. In most cases these are set well below ridge height and thus appear subordinate to the original
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- dwelling. One of the few exceptions to this prevailing pattern is the side dormer to No 43, which extends to the existing ridge height.
6. The proposal seeks to construct a rear dormer, set approximately 0.5m in from the sides of the consented gable ends and 0.5m above the eaves height. Its overall height would match that of the ridge of the dwelling.
 7. The development plan includes the Elmbridge Core Strategy 2011 (CS), and the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan 2015 (DMP). CS policy CS17 seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that development delivers high quality design which responds to the positive features of individual locations, integrating sensitively with the locally distinctive townscape.
 8. DMP policy DM2 seeks to ensure, in part, that all new development achieves high quality design; and that proposals should preserve or enhance the character of the area with particular regard to appearance, scale, mass, height, the prevailing pattern of built the environment and the character of the host building.
 9. Further guidance is given in the *Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD). This recommends that roof extensions should not dominate the roof by being over-large. It also discourages the use of flat roofed dormers.
 10. The proposed rear dormer, although set back from the eaves and set in from the sides of the roof, would appear overly large. Its height and width would lead to an excessively bulky structure that, rather than appearing subservient to the roof, would dominate the roof plane of the host building. Due to the increase in size and bulk that would be caused by the consented hip to gable extension, the addition of this large rear dormer would tip the balance, giving the roof a top heavy appearance that would be out of scale with the modest proportions of the original house, particularly when viewed from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties.
 11. Although set back from the eaves, it would straddle the hipped roof of the rear projection and introduce a new flat roof form. When viewed in conjunction with the transition from the crown roof to the hipped roof of the rear projection, and the consented pitched roof, the varied roof styles would look cluttered – competing for space in front of the same roof plane – and give the rear dormer a contrived appearance that would cause further harm.
 12. I acknowledge that the proposed materials would broadly match those of the existing dwelling. However, this factor is not sufficient reason to permit an otherwise unsatisfactory form of development.
 13. I note that the extension would provide additional accommodation for the appellant without increasing the footprint of the house; this benefit however cannot outweigh the permanent harm to the appeal site and immediate area.
 14. The appellant suggests that the broad principle of rear dormers is acceptable as they are generally permitted development. Although I acknowledge this, the appellant does not argue that the appeal development is permitted development. The appeal is for full planning permission and the proposed development must be assessed on its merits; in this case the volume of the roof would be substantially enlarged by the approved hip to gable extension, and the proposed rear dormer would increase this bulk further still. Thus, when viewed in combination with the hip to gable extension, the dormer would

appear excessively large and bulky in comparison to the modest proportions of the house, and cause harm for the reasons outlined above.

15. The appellant has argued that the proposal would not be at odds with National policy as set out in the national Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However the Framework makes it clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and that poorly designed development should be refused where it fails to improve the character and quality of an area. In my view the proposal fails to achieve these objectives.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposal would materially harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. As such it conflicts with CS Policy CS17, DMP Policy DM2, and advice in the SPD. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

Oliver Blower

Appointed Person