
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2017

by Rory MacLeod BA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/W/17/3168087
28 & 30 Freelands Road, Cobham KT11 2ND

- 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 Hugh Doherty against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/3008, dated 14 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion at No.28 and roof amendments to No.30 to suit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the development, and in particular the rear dormer to no.28, on the character and appearance of the existing building and on the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a pair of semi-detached houses constructed with hipped pitched roofs. A side dormer window and rear roof light have been added to no.30 whereas the roof to no.28 is unaltered. There is a wide variety in the design of houses and roofs in Freelands Road. Many including those to either side of the appeal site are detached with a gable front roof. At the time of my site inspection, extensive alterations to the house and roof at 26 Freelands Road were being undertaken.
4. It is proposed to replace the side hipped roof with a gable end to both properties and to raise the height of the roof ridge by 0.4m requiring the height of chimneys to be similarly raised. These works would maintain the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached houses and would not be out of keeping with the mixed character of roof forms in the street scene of Freelands Road.
5. A rear dormer would be added to no.28. This would occupy most of the width and depth of the rear roof slope and would have a flat roof level with the roof ridge. It would have a bulky box like appearance that would contrast with the retained rear hipped roof at no.30.

6. Policies CS10 and CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy 2011, require new development to integrate with and respect local character. Similarly, Policy DM2 of the Development Management Plan 2015 requires that all development be based on an understanding of local character, taking account of design guidance details in the Design and Character SPD. The Elmbridge Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document 2012, Home Extensions companion, provides guidance on roof extensions and dormers; it states that they should not dominate the roof by being over large, that some existing roof should remain beneath a new dormer and that the dormer should follow the vertical lines of existing doors and windows.
7. To my mind, the roofscape of Freelands Road does not portray a unified local character, given the variety in dwelling forms. The two windows in the rear dormer would align with those at first floor level but the dormer would be large with only a small ribbon of tiling below and to the side. The dormer would not be seen from the street but it would be visible from neighbouring rear gardens. It would appear as a dominant feature detracting from the balance and appearance of the pair of semi-detached houses and would adversely affect the character of the area. Overall, I find that there would be conflict with local planning policy.
8. The appellant has pointed out that the rear dormer is unchanged from that incorporated within an approved lawful development certificate application. However, that application was an assessment against permitted development allowances, whereas the refused application and this appeal require assessment against relevant planning policies. I have noted the presence of other dormers in the surrounding area, but the site circumstances at the appeal site differ from these cases. I have also noted that no local residents have submitted objections against the proposal. Nonetheless, these factors do not outweigh the harm to the character of the area that I have identified.

Other Matters

9. The appellant refers to encouragement received to submit an application for works to both 28 and 30 Freelands Road and I have found in favour of the resulting appearance of the joint venture in the street scene. However, the appearance would be unbalanced if the works were undertaken to only one property, and the raising of the roof ridge for only one house would result in a discordant element in the street scene. Had I been minded to allow the appeal, it would not be possible to include a planning condition requiring the works to be undertaken to both sides concurrently. The properties are in separate ownership and as such, the completion of a planning obligation under S.106 of the Planning Act 1990 would be necessary to ensure that the development is carried out as one scheme. No such obligation has been included amongst the appeal documents.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the rear dormer would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and on the surrounding area. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Rory MacLeod

INSPECTOR