



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2021

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 DECEMBER 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/21/3281705

Veljon, South Close, Woking, GU21 4TB

- 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 Scott Soper against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2021/0518 dated 5 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is hip to gable roof extensions to facilitate loft conversion, dormer windows to rear roof plane, insertion of roof lights to front, side and rear roof planes and addition of external wall insulation to first floor walls.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Shortly after the refusal of this application the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 20th July 2021. The Framework does not, of course, change the starting point for determination as being the Local Plan in accordance with S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Given the main issues to be considered within this appeal I do not find that this revision to the Framework impacts upon the basis of determination for this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character of the host dwelling and the surrounding street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a two-storey detached dwelling which has previously been extended at two storeys. The existing roof is a hipped pitched roof which extends back over the existing extension. There are several elements to the appeal proposal as outlined in the development description above. The Council note that the proposed rooflights in the rear elevation would be in proportion to the roof and the building as a whole and that this element would be acceptable. I have no reason to conclude differently. The refusal reason is, therefore, based upon the proposed gables with flat roofed dormers on either side.
5. At the time of my site visit I noted that hipped roof forms are characteristic of the dwellings within South Close. The proposal would result in the loss of the hipped roof at the appeal site which is characteristic feature of properties within the area. I find that the additional massing proposed at roof level would result in a disproportionate addition to the roof of the appeal site and that this

- would make the dwelling appear unbalanced and top heavy. The additional mass does not respect the existing building proportion and this would harm the existing character of the host dwelling.
6. In terms of the street scene itself, at the time of my site visit I walked up and down South Close and found that the side elevation of the appeal site is prominent upon entering South Close as the first property on the left. Views would be more limited approaching from the other end of South Close. The prominent location upon entering South Close, combined with the unbalanced and top heavy massing proposed, I find would appear incongruous and harm the character of the street scene which is characterised by more sympathetic hipped roofs as previously outlined.
 7. The appellant has submitted examples of hip to gable and dormer conversions in the form of photographs; however, none appear to match the cumulative bulk and massing of that proposed within the proposal before me. These, and the annotated aerial map, show that there is only one non-hipped roof in South Close which further supports hipped roofs as a characteristic feature of the street scene within which the appeal site stands. The refusal reason is specific as to impact upon the surrounding street scene. As a result of this, examples of gable and dormers/common dormers beyond South Close itself carry limited weight in an assessment of the street scene of South Close within which the appeal proposed would be viewed.
 8. The appellant's case is also heavily reliant upon a claimed fallback position but no evidence has been submitted before me to evidence, or certify, what could be achieved under permitted development as claimed. It is not within the scope of this appeal to determine what may, or may not, be permitted development or the options which may be available to the appellant. A fallback position can of course be a material consideration, however, there should be a real prospect of a fallback being implemented. Based upon the evidence before me I do not find there is a greater than theoretical possibility that any claimed fallback development might take place.
 9. The proposal would be contrary to Woking Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS21 which states that development should make a positive contribution to the street scene, respect the character of the area within which it is situated and pay due regard to other characteristics of adjoining buildings. The proposal would also be contrary to the Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document 2015 which advises that roof forms that are contrary to the existing roof form will generally be resisted and that additional mass should respect the existing building proportion and balance.

Other Matters

10. The appellant states that the proposed gable end is positioned far enough away from the neighbouring property without having detrimental impact on their outlook, amenity or daylight. This is noted; however, the Council's refusal reason is based upon the matters within the main issue as outlined in this decision letter. A lack of impact upon neighbouring amenity is a neutral consideration.
11. Comments outlining intention for sustainability features such as water recycling, solar water heating and heat exchange technology are noted and

positive features but they do not outweigh the harm I have identified with regard to the harm to the character of the host dwelling and the street scene.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR