

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2022

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 21st March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/21/3289330

22 Scholars Walk, Guildford, GU2 7TR

- 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 C Luscombe against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/P/01536, dated 28 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is conversion of loft space to habitable accommodation including a dormer window to the rear and 3 rooflights to the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of loft space to habitable accommodation including a dormer window to the rear and 3 rooflights to the front elevation at 22 Scholars Walk, Guildford, GU2 7TR in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 21/P/01536, dated 28 June 2021, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule to this decision.

Preliminary Matter

2. In the interests of accuracy, I have used the Council's description of the proposed development seen in its decision notice rather than the description used in the application form.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

4. The host property is a detached dwelling set within a relatively modern residential estate. However, it is untypical of most other dwellings in the estate in that it is sited alone on an elongated plot. A landscaped strip with mature trees separates the plot from housing development in Guildford Park Avenue, which lies on lower land to the south and east of the appeal site.
5. I note from the planning history that the dwelling has been subject to previous permissions to extend, and that their implementation has resulted in the creation of a substantial dwelling. In this context, and particularly since the dormer extension would be built to the rear, the scale of the proposal would not be disproportionate to that of the host property, as extended.

6. The attempts made to marry the appearance of the dormer with the host property, including the pattern of fenestration, the use of tile hanging and the half-hipped roof, have in my opinion succeeded. I do not therefore consider that the effect on the host property would cause visual harm.
7. Two dwellings¹ served by a private drive stand to the side of the appeal property, and their occupants would have the closest, albeit oblique view of the dormer. Their residents have not objected. Given the acceptability of the design, the impact on these residents would not prove harmful. Otherwise, taking account of the screening qualities of the mature landscaping mentioned earlier, the dormer would remain unobtrusive in the wider street scene, having little effect on the surrounding area.
8. I note that the Council does not object to the insertion of the rooflights in the front elevation, and I have no reason to either.
9. I conclude that the loft conversion, including the proposed dormer, would sit acceptably in its visual and spatial contexts without harming the character and appearance of the host property or its surroundings. Accordingly, no conflict arises with those provisions of saved policies G5 & H8 of the Guildford Local Plan 2003, or Policy D1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2019 directed to ensuring that new development should achieve high quality design that responds to distinctive local character.

Conditions

10. In the interests of visual amenity, I shall impose the Council's suggested condition in respect of external materials.
11. It is also necessary, in the interests of certainty that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Other matters

12. I note from their report that officers carefully assessed the potential effects of the development on the living conditions of local residents, and took into account objections raised by the occupants of two properties in Guilford Park Avenue, who expressed concern at possible loss of privacy. Having looked at this matter carefully during my site visit, I share the Council's view, for the same reasons, that no harm would result to the living conditions of any local resident.
13. All other matters referred to in the representations have been taken into consideration including the Council's references to the Guildford Supplementary Planning Document Residential Alterations and Extensions 2018 and the National Planning Policy Framework, but no other matter raised is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

¹ Nos 23 & 24 Scholars Walk

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1). The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2). The development hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with the following approved plans: 01 RevD; 02 RevD; 03 RevD; 04 RevD; 05 RevD; 06 RevD & 07 RevD.
- 3). The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.