



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2022

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22ND March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/21/3286770

54 Leatherhead Road, Ashted, Surrey, KT21 2SY

- 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 Hazel Spreckley against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2021/1181/PLAH, dated 23 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as roof ridge height raised and roof pitch increased to allow additional bedrooms and bathrooms a chalet bungalow style. Creation of two front dormers and expansion of entrance porch and raising to same height as front dormers. Creation of rear box dormer with double Juliet balconies to rear bedrooms.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for roof ridge height raised and roof pitch increased to allow additional bedrooms and bathrooms a chalet bungalow style. Creation of two front dormers and expansion of entrance porch and raising to same height as front dormers. Creation of rear box dormer with double Juliet balconies to rear bedrooms at 54 Leatherhead Road, Ashted, Surrey, KT21 2SY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref MO/2021/1181/PLAH, dated 23 June 2021 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions.
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: HS/001 Revision A, HS/002 Revision A, HS/003 Revision A, HS/004 Revision A, HS/005 Revision A and HS/006 Revision A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall be strictly in accordance with those set out in the application form.

Preliminary matter

2. The appellant has suggested that they would be prepared to consider design revisions to the scheme. However, such changes would be material and have not been formally considered by the Council or local residents. For this reason, I confirm that I am unable to take them into account in the determination of

this appeal, which has been assessed solely upon the details submitted with the planning application.

Main Issues

3. The first main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and its setting. The second main issue is the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of 52 and 56 Leatherhead Road (No.52 & No.56), with particular regard to visual impact.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Leatherhead Road is a busy distributor road which is flanked by a diverse range of single and two storey dwellings. Some of the dwellings located in the vicinity of the appeal property have been extended and this includes conversions from bungalows to dormer and chalet bungalows. The nearby dwellings feature prominent gables and/or dormer windows on their front and rear elevations, which adds to the individuality in the design and appearance of the dwellings. These dwellings have generous sized and mature landscaped gardens, typically with mature boundary planting which screens the dwellings from each other and to a large extent from the street scene.
5. Consistent with this the appeal dwelling is set back from the street scene behind a deep front garden which is enclosed at the sides by tall hedges and trees. To the rear the property has an enclosed, deep rear garden which slopes up to the southeast. The appeal property comprises a modest sized dormer bungalow with a fully hipped roof and a rear dormer window. At the rear of the dwelling are three attached single storey gables which, due to their projection, height and proximity to the dormer window, result in the dwelling appearing squat, cluttered and poorly proportioned. Not only is the dwelling of no particular architectural interest, its condition can aptly be described as "tired".
6. The dwellings on either side of the appeal property have very similar front building lines, although they are deeper than the appeal property to the rear. The dwelling at No.52 comprises a dormer bungalow with two rear projecting wings with gable roofs and a dormer window. The dwelling at No.56 sits at a slightly higher level to the appeal property. It has a gabled roof, flat roofed dormers to the front and rear and a rear projecting wing with a window within its rear facing gable.
7. Together and amongst other things Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 (LP), Policies ENV22 & ENV32 seek to ensure that new development respects its setting and is appropriate in relation to its scale, form, appearance and external building materials. Residential extensions should not be unduly prominent from neighbouring properties or the immediate locality and should retain the character and style of the existing property. Mole Valley Core Strategy (CS) Policy CS14 requires new development to respect and enhance the character of the area, whilst making best use of the site.
8. Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), similarly states that new development should be sympathetic to local character, be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and add to the overall quality of the area, whilst optimising the potential of the site.

9. With the proposal the ridge height of the dwelling would be raised by just over 1.5 metres and the side hips would be changed to gables. On the front roof slope would be two pitched roof dormers with a central two storey projecting gable, with a raised eaves height and large areas of glazing. To the rear would be a large flat roofed dormer, with two sets of full height glazed doors set behind Juliet balconies. In addition, the ground floor fenestration would be changed.
10. The resultant dwelling would have a symmetrically designed front elevation and whilst the front dormers and gable would include large areas of glazing, prominent gable features and various sized dormer windows are a common feature in the locality. Visually they would break up the expanse of the front roof slope and would respect the character and appearance of nearby dwellings and the street scene as a whole.
11. To the rear the host dwelling sits at a lower level to the rear garden and to the dwelling at No. 56. As a consequence, the proposed roof would sit down within the plot. The proposed dormer extension would replace the existing triple gable and low chimney, which are finished in white painted render, as well as the existing dormer window. The dormer extension would span most of the width of the dwelling; sit well below the ridge line of the new roof; and would project down to just above eaves height.
12. For these reasons, the main façade of the proposed dormer extension would appear as a continuation of the rear ground floor elevation and the use of white render would not look unduly prominent or out of place. Whilst the detailing of the rear elevation would be completely changed, it would be simplified, balanced and would respect the rear garden environment.
13. Overall, the proposal would modernise and introduce changes to the character and appearance of the dwelling, which would be contrary to LP Policy ENV32 (3). Notwithstanding this, as stated above the existing dwelling is of no particular architectural merit and is visually "tired". Also, the character and appearance of the dwellings along this part of Leatherhead Road is diverse.
14. For these reasons, I find that the proposal would improve the character, appearance and condition of the host dwelling, whilst retaining the existing dwelling's footprint, main eaves line, use of dormers and gables and palette of external materials. Similarly, the proposal would respect its immediate and wider setting. Accordingly, it would comply with the objectives and all other criterion set out in the policies referred to above.
15. I conclude that the proposal would respect and improve the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its setting. Accordingly, the proposal would comply with LP Policy ENV22, CS Policy CS14 and paragraph 130 of the Framework.

Living conditions

16. The resultant dwelling would be separated from the dwelling and gardens at No.52 by the existing detached garage and tall mature planting. The two dwellings have consistent front building lines and to the rear the dwelling at No.52 has a tall wing which projects well beyond the rear building line of the appeal dwelling. Whilst it has two roof lights due to their height and angle any views through them of the proposed rear dormer extension would be limited.

As a result of these factors the proposed extension would not have a materially harmful impact on the outlook from No.52.

17. Similarly, there are tall shrubs and trees along the boundary with No.56 and the front dormer window at No.56 projects close to the front building line of the property. The rear garden at No.56 rises to the rear and the dwelling sits at a higher level to the appeal dwelling. To the rear, the adjacent dormer window at No.56 projects close to the rear building line of the appeal dwelling and beyond this dormer window there is a deep rear extension.
18. As a consequence, whilst the occupiers of No.56 would be able to glimpse, at an oblique angle, the outer edges of the proposed roof extension from their adjacent rear and front windows, the impact would be negligible. In views from the rear garden at No.56, where the roof extension could be glimpsed, due to its modest height in relation to the rear garden area, it would be unexceptional and would be readily assimilated into the rear garden environment.
19. The occupiers of both properties would continue to benefit from open and spacious outlooks into the rear and front garden environments.
20. I conclude on the second main issue that the proposal would not have a materially adverse impact on the outlook from No.52 and No.56. Accordingly, it would comply with LP Policies ENV22 & ENV32 and paragraph 130 (f) of the Framework.

Conditions

21. The Council has suggested the imposition of a matching materials condition. However, whilst I consider that a materials condition is necessary to ensure the resultant dwelling respects the character and appearance of the immediate area, I find that the proposed materials, which are set out in section 5 of the application form, are appropriate. Accordingly, I have amended the wording of the suggested condition to reflect this. The Council has also suggested a condition relating to adherence to the submitted drawings, which is necessary in the interests of precision and certainty.

Conclusion

22. Having regard to the conclusions on both main issues, the appeal is allowed.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR