

# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 April 2022

**by Robin Buchanan BA (Hons) MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/D/22/3291856**

**37 Dorling Drive, Ewell KT17 3BH**

- 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 Robert Carey against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 21/00694/FLH, dated 20 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 December 2021.
  - The development proposed is described as the construction of a two-storey extension to the front of the house, a small single storey side infill extension and a further single storey extension to the rear, along with an entrance porch and a new roof with associated rear dormers and new windows.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the area, having particular regard to its principal elevation.

## Reasons

3. The appeal property is a 1960s detached two-storey house. It is similar to the rows of other houses along both sides of Dorling Drive and like most of these it has not been significantly altered. The simple, horizontal emphasis to the design of the principal (front) elevations of these houses and narrow palette of external materials convey a common theme and strong visual cohesion in the individual and collective appearance of these houses. Though not listed buildings or in a Conservation Area they nonetheless have a legible and locally distinctive semblance. This is easy to appreciate in public views along this long, straight cul-de-sac and is worthy of protection.
4. The houses have ground floor bay windows, integral side and/or front garages and porches under flat or narrow lean-to tiled hipped roofs. Consequently, first floor bay windows with projecting gables would not be representative of the appeal property or the principal elevations of other houses in Dorling Drive. These elements would, therefore, jar with the wide, plain first floor elevations under an unbroken eaves line, with hipped or gable ended main roofs above. It would also give an overly complicated and staggered articulation to the principal elevation and an inordinate vertical emphasis, including the tall, narrow staircase window.

5. Some houses are red or buff brick built but many, including the appeal property, alternate with contrasting brick, white render or red tile hanging between ground and first floor. Otherwise, brown tiled main roofs and white framed fenestration with distinguishing glazing bars prevail. Render over two floors would be unique in Dorling Drive but not, in my view, incompatible. However, its grey colour would be alien and out of keeping, so too the grey framed fenestration and grey roof tiles.
6. These aspects of the proposal would significantly alter the design of the principal elevation of the appeal property. It would, therefore, no longer reflect important intrinsic features of this house or adjoining houses. Furthermore, albeit one house amongst many in Dorling Drive, it would nevertheless stand out as fundamentally different and incongruous. For these reasons it would be conspicuous and unduly erode the visual integrity of the Dorling Drive streetscene.
7. The proposal would significantly increase the depth of the appeal property, including a crown roof. At the rear this would not be overly apparent in public views due to narrow gaps between houses or the long set back distance from the road. At the front the principal elevation would broadly align with that of No.35 on one side and step forward of No.39 on the other side. This would create a similar, acceptable staggered arrangement between the appeal property and No.39 as currently exists between it and No.35, including greater separation distance. It would also maintain the general building line along this side of Dorling Drive.
8. Some houses in Dorling Drive have been altered or extended at the side or front. However, in design, external materials and fenestration these works have mostly been executed in a manner that successfully integrates with these houses and respects important features, thus retains the essence of their overall appearance. It adds to the streetscene in a positive way and maintains the broad homogeneity of residential development in Dorling Drive. I have also been referred to some other houses that have been altered or extended, including with features similar to the proposed development. However, these houses are in different roads with no visual relationship to the appeal property. Accordingly, this development elsewhere does not provide any meaningful context or justification in this case.
9. I find that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the area, having particular regard to its principal elevation. Consequently, it would not comply with Policy CS5 of the Council's Core Strategy 2007 or Policies DM9 and DM10 of its Development Management Policies Document 2015. These policies include that the form of development should reinforce local distinctiveness and be compatible with townscape, streets and locally distinctive features. It should also be appropriate in detail and key features including roof form, window format, detailing of elevations and materials. In these respects, it would also not reflect relevant advice on extensions in the Council's Householder Applications Supplementary Planning Guidance 2004.

### **Other Matters**

10. The absence of greater local resident objection, or the extent of local resident support, does not mean an absence of planning harm in the wider public interest. I appreciate that the Council's Conservation and Design Officer did not

object to the proposal but his comments are advice. The Council made the decision that it did and I have considered this particular proposal and the appeal on its individual planning merits.

### **Planning Balance**

11. The proposal would provide high quality additional living space and improve the sustainability credentials of the appeal property. This would be aligned with aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) to meet people's living needs and for energy consumption. These are notable benefits in support of the proposal, albeit that it is relatively small-scale in nature. I therefore give modest weight to these considerations.
12. The appeal property is in Flood Zone 1 and not in the Green Belt. It would make satisfactory provision for car parking and would not adversely affect the living conditions of the occupiers of existing dwellings. In these respects, the absence of harm and compliance with the Council's development plan and the Framework are neutral factors in my decision.
13. However, the contemporary and innovative design approach in this case would not be appropriate as the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the area. It would conflict with objectives of the Framework to achieve well-designed places with development that adds to the overall quality of the area and is sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and which maintains a strong sense of place and distinctive places to live. As a result, I give substantial weight to these considerations.
14. Consequently, the adverse impacts of the proposed development would outweigh the benefits.

### **Conclusion**

15. The proposal would not accord with the development plan overall. There are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding.
16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

*Robin Buchanan*

INSPECTOR