The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2022

by Robert Naylor BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/22/3294204
3 Michael Lane, Guildford GU2 9LB

- 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 and Mrs Leyland against the decision Guildford Borough Council.
- The application Ref 21/P/02608, dated 13 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2022.
- The development proposed is loft conversion including rear dormer and 3 x skylights on the front roof.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the proposed loft conversion including rear dormer and 3 x skylights on the front roof at 3 Michael Lane, Guildford GU2 9LB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/P/02608, dated 13 December 2021, 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: ST_JUN21_3 MIC_00; ST_NOV21_3 MIC 001 Rev C and ST_NOV21_3 MIC 002 Rev C.

    3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the extensions hereby approved shall match those of the existing dwelling.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on the western side of Michael Road which is a residential road within the Queen Elizabeth Park estate. The character of the area is a planned estate, made up of a mixture of detached, semi-detached and flatted developments of two and three storeys in height with an "Arts and Crafts" feel. The roof treatments are equally varied with examples of hipped, gable and cat-slide roofs.

4. The rear dormer extension would be of generous proportions with a flat roof. As such, it would not comply with the advice in the Residential Extension and Alterations: Guildford Borough Council Supplementary Planning Document 2018 (SPD) that promotes subordinate pitched roof dormers which are less

than half the width of the roof. However, there are several smaller flat roof rear dormers at Nos 5, 7 and 11 Michael Lane, and a larger flat roof dormer extension at No 6 Knox Road, which is akin to the appeal proposal. These are visible from several public vantage points, including Wake Close at the rear of the appeal site. Within this context, the proposed development would not appear as an incongruous feature to either the host property or wider area.

5. The dormer would be set appreciably lower than the ridge of the main house, as well as set in from both flanks. Therefore, while not strictly in accordance with SPD guidance, the appeal proposal would not look out of proportion in relation to the host dwelling. The dormer would be compatible with local character, materials and detailing and so it would cause no harm to the visual qualities of the existing property, Michael Road or the surrounding Queen Elizabeth Park estate.

6. The development also includes three front rooflights. The Council and appellant agree that these would cause no harm to the host property and the surrounding area, particularly in light of other examples in the vicinity. I concur with this assessment that this part of the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host property or Queen Elizabeth Park estate.

7. Therefore, I conclude the development would not harm the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. In these regards, it would comply with Policy D1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites, adopted April 2019 and saved policies G5 and H8 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan adopted January 2003. Amongst other things, these require new development to achieve high quality design, to respect the distinctive local character and to be compatible with the surrounding area.

Other Matters

8. The Council officer's report refers to an interested person's concern that the rear dormer would lead to overlooking onto the neighbouring properties 1, 5 and 11 Michael Lane. The Council have raised no overlooking concerns resulting from the development. Given the suburban setting, a degree of mutual overlooking is to be expected and I would concur with this assessment and identify no additional harm as a result of the development. This matter does not outweigh or alter my conclusion on the main issue.

Conditions

9. I have imposed conditions requiring commencement of development within three years, and development to be in accordance with the approved plans for certainty. I have also attached a condition requiring the use of matching materials in the interests of a good quality appearance to the development. I have considered these in relation to the tests within paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and find that they are necessary in this case.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR