

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2022

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/22/3304706

140 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St Johns, Woking, Surrey GU21 8UH

- 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 & Mrs Paul and Linda Cooper against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. PLAN/2022/0501, dated 19 May 2022 was refused by notice dated 20 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is a box dormer to the front elevation to provide increased living space within loft rooms.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dormer on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Hermitage Woods Crescent.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that Nos. 138-144 Hermitage Woods Crescent, including the appeal dwelling at No. 140, form a group of detached but closely spaced bungalows of the same design on the south side of the road. The Council's concern is one of the loss of the original 'eyebrow' dormer and its replacement with a larger flat roofed box dormer. It is considered that this would be a dominating and incongruous structure that would harm the appearance of the host dwelling and have an adverse effect on the street scene.
 4. For the appellants it is argued that there are about 200 dwellings in the Crescent including nine of the same type and design as No. 140. These include No. 165 where the original eyebrow dormer has been replaced by a dormer of the same size, bulk and proportion as the appeal scheme. (No. 92 is also cited but this retains the eyebrow feature and has a pitched roof dormer to either side). Reference is also made to half a dozen semi-detached properties with front dormers, but the Council confirms these were part of the original design.
 5. I acknowledge that flat roofed box dormers to the front of dwellings are at least part of the character and appearance of the area. However, the difference in this case is that the appeal dwelling is one of a row of four in which the original design incorporating the eyebrow feature remains unaltered.
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6. As the Council says, they form a cohesive and visually pleasing group which the proposed dormer would significantly disrupt. And with two storey houses to both sides which define this group as a distinctive visual entity, the setting of No. 140 is quite different to No. 165. The latter has a corner position and this, together with a neighbouring garage of an unsympathetic design, prevents it being read as a pair with an adjoining property of the same original design.
7. Overall, whilst there are other box dormers in the road, including one as a result of alterations to a house of the same design, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the original dwelling and the street scene. Accordingly, the proposal would be in conflict with Policies CS21 & CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012; the Council's Design SPD 2015 and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
8. For these reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR