



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 March 2023

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

date: 21st April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/23/3314974

90 Ash Street, Ash, Aldershot, GU12 6LW

- 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 Stuart Jefferson against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/P/01387, dated 9 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed addition of a crown flat roof with front rooflights and rear dormer, changes to side fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the addition of a crown flat roof with front rooflights and rear dormer, changes to side fenestration, at 90 Ash Street, Ash, Aldershot, GU12 6LW, in accordance with the terms of application Ref 22/P/01387, dated 9 August 2022 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: 3004.01.ELE Revision A, 3004.02.PLAN Revision A, 3004.03.N-SP Revision A, 3005.01.X-PLA and 3005.02.X-EL.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the walls and roof of the development hereby permitted shall accord with those shown on drawing No. 3004.01.ELE Revision A and the external surfaces of the windows hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Preliminary matters

2. In their decision notice the council refers to Policy HE8 of the saved policies in the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (LP). This is clearly a typing error as that policy relates to advertisements in conservation areas, whereas LP policy H8 relates to residential extensions.
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3. On 22 March 2023 the council adopted the Guildford Borough Council Local Plan: Development Management Policies (DMP), and the policies within it replace many of the saved policies in the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (LP). In particular, annex D of the DMP clarifies that LP Policies G1, G5 and H8 have been replaced by DMP Policies D4, D7 & H4. The appeal has been determined on this basis and both the council and the appellant have been made aware of the adoption of the DMP.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the neighbouring area.

Reasons

5. Ash Street includes a diverse range of detached and semi-detached houses. They include a combination of shallow and more steeply pitched hipped and gabled roofs constructed from a mixture of slate and red/brown tiles. Some of the roofs include front or rear projections, front roof lights and solar panels, small and larger rear dormer extensions and chimneys. There is also a flat crown roof over the housing development located adjacent to the junction of Ash Street and Grange Road. The pitch, mass, height and form of the roofs vary considerably depending on the dwelling widths, roof designs and the slight variation in topography. The dwellings are set back from Ash Street behind varied sized front gardens that are typically enclosed by low walls and planting.
6. These features, together with the grass verges and abundance of planting within the front and rear gardens contribute to the spacious and informal suburban character and appearance of Ash Street and the surrounding area.
7. The appeal dwelling is set back from the street scene behind a semi-circular private drive, which serves the appeal property and a pair of modern semi-detached houses, which have both been extended. These dwellings have side facing gables and similar front building lines to the appeal dwelling. The dwellings on the opposite side of the appeal dwelling sit forward of the appeal dwelling and are much older. The dwelling at No.92 Ash Street has timber framed and red brick walls under a plain tiled roof with side facing gables and rear dormer windows. 94 Ash Street has a rendered front wall, front and rear facing gables and slate roof with ornate terracotta ridge tiles.
8. The appeal dwelling has part brick and part rendered elevations, a single storey front extension and two storey bay window projection under a fully hipped roof. Whilst the dwelling is of no particular architectural merit it blends in readily with the diverse range of dwellings in the locality.
9. From the west along Ash Street the appeal dwelling is partially screened from the street scene by the pair of semi-detached dwellings and a mature hedge and planting that separates the private drive from Ash Street. Where it can be seen, the dwelling appears to have a crown roof, where the side roof slopes hide the valley gutter positioned between them. From the east along Ash Street the appeal dwelling is fully screened by the dwellings at 92 and 94 Ash Street.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) promotes a positive and creative approach to new development; higher densities where appropriate and of making effective use of land to meet housing and other

needs. Together paragraphs 126, 130 and 134 of the Framework seek the creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and require new development to be designed to a high standard. It should be sympathetic to local character and history and safeguard the environment, whilst not preventing appropriate change. Development that is not well designed should be refused.

11. Consistent with this, collectively policy D1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and sites 2015 -2034 (LPSS) and DMP policies D4 & H4 require new development to achieve high quality design that responds to distinctive local character. New development should respect the context, identity, scale, height, proportions, character, and materials of the host building and the surrounding area. It should not have an unacceptable impact upon adjacent buildings and the immediate surrounding area. DMP Policy D7 seeks to protect the living conditions of existing residents.
12. The Guildford Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Extensions and Alterations 2018 (SPD), advises that roof conversions can have a significant effect on the appearance of a dwelling and the street scene. Changes to the height or form of a roof will not normally be acceptable in areas where roof pitches and heights within the street scene are consistent. Dormers should usually be restricted to the rear roof-slope and should be sympathetic to neighbouring dwellings. Roof lights positioned within front facing roof-slopes should be 'conservation type' and should not be dominant in terms of numbers.
13. With the proposal the new roof would be visually uncluttered. The existing side hips would be replaced with truncated gables, between which the roof would be flat. On the front roof-slope would be three roof-lights and on the rear roof-slope would be a large flat roofed dormer extension. The existing plain concrete tiles would be re-used on the new roof and the side and rear first floor walls and dormer would be clad with grey composite cladding.
14. Overall, the proposal would materially change the appearance of the host dwelling and would increase its height, mass and scale. Notwithstanding this, at the front the proposed roof design would respect the uncluttered form of the host dwelling and the resultant height and pitch of the roof would respect the proportions of the host dwelling. The front facing roof-lights would be modest in form, size and appearance and would align with the larger windows below. Given that there are roof-lights and solar panels on the front and side roof-slopes of a number of dwellings in Ash Street, they would not look out of place within the street scene.
15. The resultant dwelling would be set back from and well screened from the street scene. Where it could be seen the dwelling would be readily assimilated into its surroundings. Its roof would respect the height, depth, pitch and mass of other roofs in the immediate and wider area. Where the side roof slopes could be glimpsed the narrow area of flat roof would be visually discrete.
16. Due to the size of the windows and the use of composite cladding on its sides, the rear dormer would materially increase the actual and perceived height, mass and size of the rear of the dwelling. However, the proposed dormer would be set in from the side elevations, ridge and eaves lines of the resultant dwelling. Also, its side cheeks would be screened from the street scene by the host dwelling, the adjacent dwellings and soft planting.

17. The rear dormer's fenestration would align with and would be the same size or smaller than that of the windows below and the existing first floor walls would be clad with matching grey composite panels. The overall design of the rear elevation would be balanced and cohesive. It would add to the range of rear projections, dormer windows and extensions within the diverse back garden environment.
18. For these reasons although the character and appearance of the dwelling would be changed the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the scale and character of the host dwelling, or the context and character of adjacent buildings, the immediate and wider surroundings. It would be readily assimilated into the street scene.
19. The appellant has referred to several roof extensions within Ash Street and the surrounding area. I also noted others during the appeal site visit. These extensions have blended into the street scene with varying degrees of success. Hence, rather than set a precedent they serve to reinforce to the need to assess each proposal on its individual planning merits and in accordance with the prevailing planning policies and associated advice.
20. The council has suggested the imposition of a condition which requires the external materials to be used in the development to match those of the existing dwelling. I agree that an external materials condition is necessary to ensure that the dwelling appears balanced and respects the street scene. However, whilst the proposal includes the re-use of the existing roof tiles, it also includes the cladding of parts of the existing dwelling and the proposed dormer extension with composite panels and the repainting of the retained areas of render grey. Accordingly, I have amended the wording suggested by the council to reflect this.
21. The council has also suggested a condition which requires the proposal to be constructed in accordance with the submitted plans. This condition is necessary in the interests of certainty.
22. Finally, Having regard to the distance and juxtaposition between the host dwelling and neighbouring dwellings, I am satisfied that the proposal would not have a materially adverse impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of those dwellings, with particular regard to privacy, daylight, sunlight or visual impact.
23. I conclude on the main issue that the proposal would respect and blend in readily with the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the neighbouring area. Accordingly, it would comply with DMP Policies D4 & H4, LPSS Policy D1, the objectives of the SPD and paragraphs 126 & 130 of the Framework.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR