

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2023

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/23/3322489

83 Albert Street, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 3RN

- 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 Ms Rebecca Appleton against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00080/HOU, dated 13 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing ground floor kitchen, bathroom and shed and erection of a single storey rear extension, conversion of loft into habitable accommodation, replacement of roof on first floor bathroom and new bathroom window on first floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is an unadorned two storey end of terrace home on a stretch of road where other dwellings of broadly similar size and form also feature. The ridge runs parallel to the road and the unaltered pitched roof has a part which, like its neighbour, runs down to the roof of a flat roofed ground floor projection. In this case the single storey element, which is narrower than the house, is sizeable in length and irregular in form. Taken as a whole the area is of established character with the terraced homes' front and rear leading to a relatively pleasing fairly low-key scene. The proposal is as described above.
 4. There are three main elements to the scheme. Looking at the main roof dormer I find the design to be over-sized and unduly box-like. Virtually none of the existing pitched roof would remain and the new structure would be too bulky and dominant and lack any degree of subtlety which this modest terrace would call for. The creation of a gabled structure in place of the lower mono pitch would also be rather incongruous, not least due to the neighbouring roof form. It may be deemed acceptable in its own right, and I would not pre-judge this, but it is certainly not helped by abutting and overlapping with the planned dormer above. The conglomeration would look discordant, incongruous and
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top-heavy. Finally, turning to the single storey element, I entirely take the Appellant's point about the suitability of the length of this given the existing ground floor layout. Where I differ is that its bulk would be too great, any degree of subservience would be lost; it would, for example, be too high at its side edges for its width and look out of place at the rear of this modest home.

5. Given the foregoing, when I consider the overall scheme before me, it would be out of character, excessive and visually harmful and thus represent poor design.
6. Policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan 2032, saved Policy GEN1 of The Hart Local Plan 2006 and Policy 10 of the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan are relevant. Taken together, and amongst other matters, they seek good quality development, with suitable architectural design and scale such that a scheme is complementary to its immediate and wider context, reflects surroundings, and generally protects local character. I conclude that the proposal would conflict with these policies.
7. I would add that I note the Council raises neighbouring residential amenity concerns within the Officer's Report but these do not run through to the Decision Notice. For the most part I take the Appellant's points on this question given the whole context. However, I do consider that the scheme would have a marked impact upon amenity for neighbours at No. 81 Albert Road through a sense of being hemmed-in and light reduction given proximity of the ground floor extension, its height of vertical walling and eaves, the orientation, and bearing in mind that this property has a less generous length of rear garden. This aspect adds to my concerns over the scheme as a whole and is symptomatic of design flaws.

Other matters

8. I can appreciate the Appellant's wish to increase the accommodation at this property and achieve a more modern workable layout. I note that there would effectively be no change to the streetscene. The matter of 'permitted development' for the upper-level works is touched on by both principal parties but it is not in my remit to check this and I have no legal papers before me on the issue. I give only limited weight to what may, or may not, be a fall-back and I have to assess the scheme before me on its merits. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
9. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR