



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2023

by Robert Naylor BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/D/23/3322276

20 Mount Pleasant, Epsom KT17 1XE

- 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 G Nechita against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
- The application Ref 23/00122/FLH, dated 3 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 24 March 2023.
- The development proposed is described as the alterations of existing bungalow involving raising of existing main ridge height pitched roof to create habitable first floor incorporating alterations to fenestration.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development cited in the planning application form differs to that contained within the decision notice and appeal form. There is no evidence that this change was formally agreed. The latter more accurately reflects the scope of the proposed plans which were submitted, consulted upon, determined by the Council and are now the subject of this appeal. As no parties' interests would be prejudiced, in the interests of clarity I rely upon that latter description for the purposes of the heading above.
3. During my site observations, construction works had commenced at the ground floor level which have not been shown on the submitted plans before me. I have been presented with no details in respect to any certificate of lawful development issued or planning permission granted for these works, however construction appears to be independent from the appeal proposal before me. Consequently, for the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal based on the proposed plans before me.
4. There is another appeal at the adjoining property at 18 Mount Pleasant made by a separate appellant also against the refusal of planning permission by Epsom and Ewell Council. This appeal is for the *"alterations and extension of main roof (involving conversion of loft space to habitable use) incorporating dormer window and two rooflights on front roofslope"* and is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Character and Appearance

6. The appeal site is located on the northern side of Mount Pleasant, a residential cul-de-sac consisting of detached and semi-detached bungalows and two-storey dwellinghouses. The entrance to Mount Pleasant consists mainly of the bungalow properties, albeit some of these have been extended to provide living accommodation in the roof space. Within the area, there are purpose built two-storey detached properties, adding to the variety in appearance of buildings. The character and appearance are therefore varied in terms of the design, material and styles of the properties, however despite this variation the overall appearance of the street scene provides an increase in height and scale, as one moves from the lower level bungalows at the beginning of the road, to the taller two-storey dwellings at the end of the cul-de-sac.
7. The appeal site is located within the cluster of smaller bungalows which all exhibit either hipped or gables roof slopes to the front elevations. This cluster occupies a prominent and important position, close to the start of the road, which emphasises the overall low building level and low-density character of this part of the area.
8. The proposal would provide a significant increase in the ridge height at the host property of approximately 2.1m to provide an additional storey. The proposed first floor extension would be extremely visible, and significantly higher than the original ridge height of the host property, and as a result would provide a more dominant ridge height within an area characterised by lower level buildings. The additional height and scale of development would result in a disjointed appearance to the detriment of the host property and the adjoining cluster.
9. The appellant asserts that the style and design would be appropriate, compatible with the appearance of the existing dwelling, which I would acknowledge, however it is the scale and height of the proposal that would be inappropriately excessive. The protrusion above the adjoining rooflines would provide a disproportionate vertical feature, accentuating the overall height of the first-floor extension. It would appear awkward and would noticeably stray from the architectural form of the cluster of the bungalows that adjoin the site either side.
10. The appellant draws my attention to other examples¹ in Mount Pleasant notably at Nos. 3 and 26, that have been granted permission. Whilst these examples provide evidence of ridge heights being increased and further highlight variations within the area, both of these properties have a more modest scale, and whilst provide accommodation in the roof space still maintain a low-level appearance.
11. During my site observations I also noted other roof extensions and additions at Nos. 4, 5, 7, 12 and 19 which are all highly visible from the public realm, however I have no evidence in respect to the planning history associated with these properties. Nevertheless, despite providing large dormer extensions mainly at the rear, the overall property height remains relatively unchanged,

¹ Epsom and Ewell Planning Refs: 02/00926/FUL and 20/00980/FLH

providing a proportional addition to these properties and maintaining the overall low building level and low-density character in this part of the area.

12. In relation to the main issue, the proposal would be contrary to the relevant provisions of Policy CS5 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy 2007 and Policies DM9 and DM10 of the Epsom and Ewell Development Management Policies, adopted September 2015, which amongst other things, seeks to provide high quality design, which reinforces local distinctiveness and respects and maintains scale, layout, height, form (including roof form) and massing. Neither would the proposal accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework which amongst other things, also seeks to secure high quality design which protects local character.

Other matters

13. I am mindful of the appeal decision² at the adjoining property, given that I was the decision maker for both appeals. I have reached an alternative conclusion in respect to the decision at No.18, as I found that proposal more appropriate within the character and appearance of the area, due to its significantly more modest height, scale, and relationship to the surrounding vernacular. As such, I find that the schemes are not directly comparable.

Conclusion

14. Taking all of the above into account, the proposal would therefore conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no other material considerations to indicate that my decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR

² PINS Ref: APP/P3610/D/23/3322403