

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 January 2024

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/23/3333511

101 Saffron Platt, Guildford, Surrey GU2 9XY

- 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 Jasmine Hatch against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/P/01319, dated 2 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 9 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is for a loft conversion comprising a gable end roof extension, flat roof rear dormer and roof terrace with privacy screen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') was published in December 2023, but there are no material changes relevant to the substance of the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within a residential street with the immediate locality characterised by predominantly hipped roof semi-detached and detached dwellings many of which have been altered and extended over time, including through loft conversions and roof extensions.
5. I have had regard to the examples cited both within Saffron Platt and further afield where hip to gable roof extensions have been permitted. With regard to the former, whilst their presence cannot be ignored, nonetheless I consider they do not constitute the predominant roof form within the immediate locality, with the vast majority of dwellings retaining their hipped roof forms. Combined with the other examples, it is not for me to comment on the appropriateness of them or otherwise, but a clear unbalancing of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, whether they be bungalows or two storey houses, can have a disruptive effect upon the prevailing pattern of development within an area. Ultimately however, each case must be assessed on its own merits.

6. 101 Saffron Platt is on the right hand side of a pair of semi-detached bungalows currently with their original main roofs intact. The flank elevation of the appeal site is highly visible within the street scene such that the hip-to-gable dormer extension would be very exposed, and out of character with the prevailing pattern of development in the immediate vicinity. I acknowledge that the side dormer at 103 Saffron Platt would have a smaller set down from the ridge line than the appeal proposal, although the design of the permitted extensions on that property are materially different and relate to a detached bungalow as opposed to one half of a semi-detached pair.
7. I accept that the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (2018) (SPD) states that dormer roof extensions should be set down from the main ridge line and reflect the style and proportion windows on the existing house. Whilst the proposal may comply with the general spirit of that text, the SPD also states that the purpose of a dormer window is to provide light and not to gain increases in habitable floor area and changing the form of a roof will not usually be acceptable in areas where roof pitches and heights in the streetscape are consistent. In addition, the SPD states that generally flat roof dormer windows will not be supported.
8. I acknowledge that often such dormers are deemed to be permitted development although as the dormer the subject of the appeal proposal forms part and parcel of a larger roof extension and loft conversion, it falls to me to assess it on its own merits. In the grand scheme of things, only the north western flank elevation of the dormer would be visible from the street and being set to the rear views of this would be reasonably oblique. However the hip-to-gable extension would be particularly noticeable from the public realm and would significantly unbalance the pair of semi-detached bungalows.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development due to its overall scale would result in a form of development which would be out of scale with the existing dwelling and harmful to the character and appearance of the area. This is contrary to Policy D1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2015 – 2034 and Policies H4 and D4 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan Development Management Policies March 2023 which require all new developments to achieve high quality, taking into account local design guidance contained within SPDs ensuring that it has no unacceptable effect on the existing context and character of the adjacent buildings and immediate surroundings.

Conclusion

10. Having regard to the above and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR