



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 April 2024

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/23/3333951

169 High Road, Byfleet, West Byfleet, Surrey, KT14 7BW.

- 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 Dan Ratcliffe against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2023/0781, dated 11 September 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as *first floor extension, to provide additional living space, with 5 dormer window projections and a rooflight in the roof slopes, and two storey rear extension.*
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council has advised that Policy BE1 of the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Development Plan was referred to erroneously in the reasons for refusal set out on the refusal notice. I will therefore not take this policy in consideration in my determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

3. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposed development on the architectural integrity of the host property and thereby the appearance of the street scene and the character and appearance of the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property, 169 High Road, is a detached gable roofed 'L' shaped bungalow. One leg of the building has a steep, double pitched roof while the other has a single steep pitched roof. This former gate lodge was designed and detailed in a Victorian Gothic style. All traces of the gate and driveway have been lost and it now sits in the centre of a triangular plot on a prominent corner site. Nevertheless, the property is generally well screened by tall mature trees, hedges and close boarded fencing.
5. The appellant proposes the removal of the twin gable roof and, while maintaining the same pitch, eaves and ridge line, seeks to replace it with a new mansard style roof. Three shallow pitched dormer windows are proposed spaced evenly along both sides of the mansard roof. In addition, the dwelling would be extended about 1.0 metres towards the south-western boundary,

- with a small, high-level window in the new gable wall. Due to the established mature boundary planting the mansard roof and its gable wall would not be open to public view.
6. Given that the form and appearance of the existing double pitched roof is already denuded by the earlier introduction of a flat roof dormer built in the valley, the new gable end is well screened from public view and the pitch, eaves and ridge lines of the original roof would be maintained I do not share the Council's concern in respect of the visual harm due to alteration to the form and structure of the roof.
 7. However, I consider that the six new dormers by reason of the shallow pitched roofs, height, relationship with the roof and fenestration design would, in the context of the style and design of the host building appear as visually incongruous alien features. The Council describe the dormer windows as subordinate features. Nevertheless, unlike the mansard roof, they would, as illustrated on the photographs provided in evidence, be open to public view. Therefore, they would in my judgement cause significant harm to the appearance of the existing dwelling as well as the character and appearance of the street scene.
 8. Accordingly, I conclude in respect of the main issue that although the modest extension and the mansard roof would be acceptable, the proposed dormers would, due to their design cause significant harm to the architectural integrity of the existing bungalow and thereby the street scene.
 9. To allow the development as designed would therefore be contrary to the aims of Policy CS21 of the Woking Local Development Document-Woking Core Strategy (Adopted October 2012), the residential extensions section of the Woking Design SPD-Supplementary Planning Document Design (Adopted February 2015) (SPD), and the national Planning Policy Framework, as they relate, along with other things, to the quality of development and the need for it to respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area.

Other Matters

10. I note the Council found the design would not have an adverse impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers, transport and issues of drainage and flooding could be addressed by condition. Based on what I have seen and read I would not disagree with its findings on these issues. Further, I am aware that there were no third party objections to the application. However, the absence of harm is a neutral factor in my considerations and, as such, I have given these matters very little weight in my decision.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR