



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 July 2024 by E Street BSc (Hons)

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/24/3343686

15 Ashcombe Road, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1NB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Adam Jordan against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref is MO/2024/0125.
 - The development proposed is described as "Loft conversion - building a roof extension with dormer to rear to form a habitable space. Including gable end to roof".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter and Main Issues

3. The Council do not object to the hip to gable extension, the loft conversion or the rooflights. I have no reason to disagree. My recommendation therefore focusses on the rear dormer window and specifically, its effect on a) the character and appearance of the area; and b) the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with specific regard to privacy.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal building is a two storey semi-detached dwelling that has been extended over two storeys to the side into a hipped roof. The roofscape is otherwise unaltered and reflects the same in surrounding similar buildings. The originality of the roof's plane and angle harks to the pleasant traditionality of the pair of buildings. Along with similar unaltered roofs and a clear decreasing hierarchy to the fenestration from the ground to first floor, it contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed dormer would be to the rear of the building but due to the proximity of others and rear/side gardens abutting each other, the rear roof slope is nevertheless sufficiently exposed to consider it no less important in its positive contribution.
5. The dormer would span not only the original roof but also the extended gable section. This excessive length, and its height, would present as a top heavy structure that would dominate and all but subsume the roof. The use of timber

cladding would appear incongruent against a more prevalent use of tile hanging. The dormer would include very large window openings, driven by its scale, span and space it would serve, which would compare awkwardly with the size of the first floor openings, unacceptably bucking the trend of the higher quality appearance of the aforementioned fenestration rhythm.

6. There are other flat roofed dormers on the rear of surrounding buildings. Some not insignificantly sized. Including the appeal unit's adjoined neighbour. I am unsure of their planning status or indeed whether they required or sought express planning permission. Nevertheless, the prevailing feel to local dormers is that they are much smaller in scale and varying degrees of the original roof scape can still be appreciated. The few unsympathetic examples tend to be the exception rather than the norm and none I have seen compare sufficiently with the length and span of the proposed dormer in this case.
7. Therefore, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area and thus conflict with Policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009 (CS) and Policy EN32 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 which together seek to ensure that development proposals are of a high-quality design and standard.

Living Conditions

8. The appeal proposal is to be located above the first storey of the dwelling with windows on the rear elevation which would result in some overlooking to neighbouring gardens. However, in a higher density residential area, this is not an unusual situation. Moreover, the increased height of the windows would be modest compared with the existing first floor. The overall separation distance between the appeal site and properties 28 and 29 Chalkpit Terrace is sufficient in such that the overlooking wouldn't be detrimental to their privacy nor warrant a reason for refusal. Essentially, the existing situation would not be made different to the point that unacceptable additional harm might arise. Therefore, the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. It would therefore comply with Policies ENV22 and ENV23 of the Mole Valley Local Plan (2000) which amongst other things seek to ensure that living conditions of properties are protected.

Other Matters

9. The local plan might be of some age, but I have no compelling evidence to suggest it would be out of date for the purposes of either a decision on this appeal or, specifically, reference to the National Planning Policy Framework. I have referred to the adopted development plan at the time I make this recommendation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

10. The appeal scheme would not comply with the development plan, specifically in regard to the first main issue. I have found in the appellant's favour on the second, but this would be a lack of harm and thus neutral in any balance. I have been given no compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced, to deviate from the development plan. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Street APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR