



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 October 2024

by N Perrins BSc (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/D/24/3348264

28 Christ Church Mount, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8NB

- 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 Michael Smith against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 24/00430/FLH.
 - The development proposed is double hip to gable roof extension incorporating a rear dormer with an increased ridge height of c600mm.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the description of development from the Council's decision notice as it more precisely describes the proposal than the version used on the planning application form.
3. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in December 2024. I have not considered it necessary to invite observations from the main parties as regards any relevance, this is in view of the determining issues at play.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and wider area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property comprises a detached two storey house on the eastern side of Christ Church Mount. The prevailing street scene character of the area comprises detached dwellings with varying roof styles, traditional vernacular and with habitable space mainly contained on ground and first floors.
6. The proposal would increase the ridge height by around 600mm and change the hipped roof to gable ends. A front gable to the property would be erected with living space and windows at second floor level. There would also be a rear dormer that would extend across most of the rear roof slope. The rear dormer would have a low-pitched gable roof.

7. Whilst I agree that the principle of increasing the ridge height is acceptable given ridge heights nearby, the proposal's combination of scale, massing and design with three different forms of gables would create a discordant, convoluted and overly prominent roof form. This would unacceptably contrast with the prevailing roof form character along the road, which whilst varied, is notable in that roofs, including those with gable frontages, are generally understated and do not overwhelm or over dominate their host properties.
8. The proposed front gable element, whilst retaining an overall triangular view central to the house, would result in the property appearing as three storeys due to the inclusion of second floor windows. There are no other properties along the street that have rooms in the roof in the way that is proposed in this case. The resulting effect would be an overly large dwelling at roof level within the street scene that is not in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, where dwellings appear as two storeys in height.
9. I acknowledge that the property is set back from the road and partially screened by mature vegetation along the frontage. However, due to the excessive size and scale of the proposed roof extension, the proposal would still be visible from some public vantage points along the road, from which it would appear out of keeping with the prevailing character and appearance of the street scene.
10. With regard to the rear dormer, the Council's Householder Applications: Supplementary Planning Guidance 2004 (SPG) advises amongst other matters that dormers should be no more than 2m in width, be flat roofed and ensure windows relates to those below. It appears from the information before me that the proposed dormer does not meet this guidance. The resulting effect would be an excessively large dormer spanning almost the full width of the property that would appear as a discordantly top-heavy addition to the property.
11. Moreover, the dormer windows not lining up with the windows at lower levels would further denude the aesthetic of the proposal and create a visually jarring form of development when read together across the floors. Whilst the dormer would not be visible from the street, it would still be prominently visible within the site itself and its immediate surrounds to the detriment of the overall character and appearance of the property.
12. I have considered the examples provided by the appellant that demonstrate there is variation in ridge heights, roof lines and angles in the vicinity to the appeal site. I have also reviewed the specific examples referenced at 55 Christ Church Mount and 21 Meadway where planning permission has been granted resulting in changes to those properties' roof form.
13. I agree that there is variation in roof form in the area. However, even with this variation, the prevailing roof scape character is that of roofs remaining proportionate to their host properties without over dominating them. I note that this is the case for 55 Christ Church Mount and the recently approved scheme at 21 Meadway. For the reasons stated, this contrasts with the appeal proposal where the roof form would appear at odds with the prevailing roof scape character of the area. As such, the examples provided do not justify the harm identified.
14. I have considered the appellant's illustration on what might be possible to construct as permitted development through the Town and Country Planning

(General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. Whilst the potential for permitted development at the property has not been confirmed through a separate formal decision by the Council, I note that the illustrations provided indicate that a materially different development would be constructed to that before me. Whilst it would be more symmetrical, it would also be smaller and likely to have less overall impact on the character of the property and wider area. As such, the permitted development illustration is not directly comparable to the issues at play in this appeal and does not provide any justification for the harm identified.

15. I also am aware that no objections were received to the proposals. However, receiving no objections to an application is not determinative as to whether the submitted scheme is acceptable in planning terms. Accordingly, I only attach very limited weight to this in my decision as each case must be considered on its merits, and it does not outweigh the harm identified.
16. To conclude, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property and wider area due to its excessive size and incongruous roof form. I find that the proposal is contrary to Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy 2007 and Policies DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015. It is also not consistent with the guidance set out in the SPG or Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. All these policies and guidance require development to be well designed and not harm the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, the proposal is not consistent with the policies of the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that would lead me to a different conclusion. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Perrins

INSPECTOR