



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 February 2025

by **Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/25/3358888

9A Portsmouth Road, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1LB

- 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 Yathesa Sreecumaar Sreecumaar against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/0945/FFU.
 - The development proposed is described on the planning application as “Loft conversion involving the erection of a rear dormer”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
 - The effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent dwelling at Badgers Oaks, Collingwood Grange Close, with regard to overlooking.

Reasons

3. The appeal concerns a detached dwelling with a first floor in the roofspace that is gable ended. There are two parts at this height, with that to the south having a lower ridge than the main roof and being smaller. There are a number of dormer additions and two storey front and rear projections all with hipped or partly hipped roofs. Despite being a relatively modern building constructed in the 1990s, together with the pitched roof form of the roofscape this gives a fairly cohesive appearance. Other properties in the small cul de sac that contains the appeal site are characterised by similar designs.
4. Taken together, Principles 7.5 and 10.5 of the Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), September 2017, indicate that dormers must be set back from the sides and ridgeline of the roof and not occupy more than half the depth and width of the roof slope, while being sympathetic and subservient to the design of the main building. Roof forms that diverge from the prevailing character will be resisted unless they contribute positively to the streetscape.

5. The proposed rear dormer addition would abut a chimney stack at one end and the roof of the lower part at the other side. It would therefore span virtually the full width of the roof on which it would be located, substantially exceeding the minimum dimension of half the host roof in the SPD. There would be a noticeably minimal gap to the ridge too. These matters would result in a feature of excessive width, scale and mass. As a result, its flat roof would be unduly large and extensive, providing a jarring contrast with the pitched roof character of the host dwelling.
6. The vertically rising face of the extension would somewhat awkwardly wrap over part of the roofs of the immediately adjacent dormer additions. The development would also have a gable partly protruding above the roof to the front projection. These aspects would result in an unduly cluttered, contrived and unattractive appearance.
7. By unacceptably diverging from the prevailing character of the dwelling and other properties nearby, the unduly wide and largely flat roof addition would be contrary to Principle 7.5 of the SPD despite the depth of the host roof and being set up from the eaves. In consequence, rather than being a subordinate and appropriately modern and contemporary addition, the dormer would be an unacceptably dominant feature. It would result in an unacceptable mismatch of styles, unduly detracting from the unified appearance of the property.
8. This would be the case despite matters such as the windows in the roof extension aligning with those below and the use of facing materials to match those in the host dwelling. It is acknowledged that the development would not be readily visible from any public viewpoints. However, any suggestion that acceptability should be conferred on this basis seems to me to represent an implicit acknowledgement of the inappropriate nature of the development.
9. For the above reasons, it is concluded that the character and appearance of the host dwelling would be harmed. The failure to achieve high quality design would result in conflict with Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2011-2028 (CSDM), February 2012, Policy DM9.
10. The back of the host dwelling faces towards the side boundary to the rear garden of the neighbouring dwelling at Badgers Oaks. The house at the appeal site is at a significantly lower ground level than the adjacent garden. However, the proposal would introduce another floor above the two below. In consequence windows in the rear of the addition would be in a noticeably more elevated position than those below. This would lead to an undue loss of privacy from particularly intrusive overlooking down into the neighbouring amenity space at an unacceptably close proximity.
11. One of the windows would serve a bathroom where obscured glazing would be appropriate. The other would concern a large adjacent space which could readily be used as a bedroom or other habitable room. The window to this area would provide the only outlook and the use of obscured glass would not therefore be acceptable in this case as it would result in an unduly poor environment for occupiers of the host dwelling. At my site visit I was able to look from the first floor windows and found that because of ground levels these face directly towards the boundary fence. They do not therefore enable intrusive overlooking down into the amenity space comparable to that which would result from the addition.

12. For these reasons, it is concluded that the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent dwelling would be harmed. As a result, there would be conflict with CSDM Policy DM9 and the SPD, which intend to prevent such detrimental effects.
13. In the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) it is indicated that decisions should ensure that developments satisfy a number of considerations. These include adding to the overall quality of the area, being visually attractive and creating a high standard of amenity for existing users, which would not result in this instance.
14. I am reinforced in my view regarding the unacceptable nature of the development by the importance placed on design in the Framework where it is indicated that the creation of high quality buildings is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and good design, which would not be achieved in this case, is a key aspect of sustainable development.
15. The Appellant indicates that a loft conversion could be constructed using permitted development rights. However, there are no drawings of any scheme that would enable a meaningful comparison with the current proposal so that this matter cannot be afforded significant weight. It is noted that the current proposal is an attempt to overcome a previous refusal of planning permission but this does not in itself confer acceptability.
16. In this case the improved accommodation would be achieved at the unacceptable expense of the quality of the built environment and the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers. In consequence and taking account of all other matters raised, it is determined that the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR