



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2025

by **John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/24/3357735

54 Robin Hood Road, St Johns, Woking, Surrey, GU21 8SY

- 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 Aditya Vikram against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2024/0518.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a rear ground floor extension, extension of rear dormer and alteration to front dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the date of the appeal, the Council has confirmed that they have granted planning permission (Ref PLAN/2024/0873) at the appeal property for works described as '*Erection of a single storey rear extension*'. I have been provided with a set of the approved plans and note these replicate the rear ground floor extension that was part of the appeal proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effects of the dormer windows' extensions and alterations to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached bungalow located within a residential neighbourhood comprising a mix of property types. It forms part of a group of four originally similar and symmetrical semi-detached pairs, with hipped roofs and mirrored front gable features for each dwelling. Several of the individual properties within this group have been altered in a variety of ways, including side hip to gable roof changes, dormer windows to the front and rear roof slopes, and other materials and fenestration alterations. The roof to No 54 has been changed from a hip to gable, with a gabled dormer to the front, and almost full width box-dormer to the rear. The proposal would include adding a second gabled dormer to the front roof slope, attached to the existing with a valley between, and extending the depth of the rear dormer by around 1m beyond the existing eaves and rear elevation to project over the new single-storey extension (now approved).
5. The *Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD) was adopted in 2015 with the purpose of providing design guidance and good practice to help

developers, applicants, and council officers improve the quality of design in new development across the borough. It deals with residential extensions at section 9D. In relation to roof extensions and dormers it states that permission will usually be granted for the installation of traditional dormer windows if they are a subordinate feature of the roofscape, they are in keeping with the character of the dwelling and street scene, and do not affect overlooking. It goes on to state that only modest extensions to the roof will be permitted which do not dominate its form and appearance or alter its character.

6. Despite the changes to some of the dwellings in the group, there remains a degree of cohesion between them, with changes to the front roof slopes, where they occur, limited to single, traditional styled dormer windows, and all positioned above the property's single-storey front gable and contained within the scope of its original roof. The second dormer to the front of No 54 would break this pattern. Its marriage with the existing would introduce a front roof extension that would be both large and incongruous, out of keeping with the pattern of development which has evolved over time. It would be entirely dependent on the already extended roof to accommodate its size and position and would dominate the form and appearance of the dwelling without any respect for its original and modest composition.
7. The dormer to the rear is already large, and similar in size and position to others that can be seen to the rear of similar properties, both in the context of their rear garden settings and in oblique views between unattached neighbouring dwellings from the public domain along Robin Hood Road. However, by increasing its depth, it would become further dependent on extensions beyond the envelope of the original building in order to accommodate its enlarged size and could not reasonably be considered to be a subordinate feature of the rear roofscape. In my assessment, its rear projection would be excessive and out of proportion with the modest scale and form of the original dwelling.
8. The appellant has suggested that the proposed rear dormer would constitute permitted development. As the eaves of the original roof would not be maintained, I am not persuaded that would be the case. It would however be open to the appellant to apply for a certificate of lawful development to establish the fact, against which there would be a right to appeal against the council's decision.
9. A suggestion that the proposal would achieve symmetry with a neighbouring property is not supported by any substantive evidence. During my visit I saw that the attached property at No 56 was unaltered at roof level to the rear. I saw that the unattached neighbouring property at No 52 had a large, rear box-like dormer with a single-storey rear extension, but it was not apparent to me that the dormer extended beyond the eaves of the original roof.
10. Overall, I find the roof alterations to the front and rear would both result in dominant and incongruous additions that would fail to respect the character and appearance of the appeal property or that of the area's wider development pattern. The proposal would fail to conform with the Council's design guidance and by so doing in this instance would neither contribute positively to the street scene nor preserve the townscape quality of the area. Although there would be improvements to the quality of life to the users of No 54, as a future proposed development that would fail to enhance the character of the area or be sensitive to its location, it would conflict with Policies CS21 and CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy October 2012, which are both relevant to the case. For the same reasons there would be conflict

with the National Planning Policy Framework's objectives for achieving well designed places.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR