



Appeal Decision

Site visit carried out on 18 February 2025

by Jennifer Vyse DipTP MRTPI DipPBM

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/24/3353284

236 Shepherds Lane, Dartford DA1 2PW

- 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 Michael Rana against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application No is DA/24/00616/FUL.
 - The development proposed comprises construction of a new roof (incorporating raising height) with formation of gable ends and front and rear dormers to provide rooms in the roof space.
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Decision

1. For the reasons that follow, the appeal is dismissed

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case relates to the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Decision

3. No 236 Shepherds Lane is a two-storey detached property, with restricted accommodation within the roof space. It sits on the northern side of Shepherds Lane, a busy main road (A2018), towards the western end of the Shepherds Lane Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC),¹ an established residential area. The western end of the ASRC, located close to Dartford Heath, is noted as being 'far more rural in character' than the eastern end, which has a 'real urban character'.
4. The appeal property has a pitched roof with hipped ends. A small, dormer sits within the upper part of the front facing roof slope, with a larger dormer to the rear. It is proposed to increase the ridge height by some 0.5m and alter the hipped roof to gable ends. A new, pitched roof dormer is shown on the front elevation (replacing the existing dormer). The existing dormer to the rear would be replaced with a large box dormer with a shallow crown roof, extending across almost the whole width of the property.
5. The Council takes no issue in principle with the proposed dormers. I have no reason to disagree. However, the appeal property lies within a long run of detached, two-storey properties (nos 224-246) of very similar design, with hipped roofs. I saw that the V-shaped gaps at roof level, resulting from the pairs of hipped ends, create a pleasing rhythm along the street scene here, helping to break up the general massing of development along this side of the road. The hipped ends also throw into relief the tall chimney stacks at the sides of many of the properties here,

¹ Shepherds Lane Area of Special Residential Character Supplementary Planning Guidance (September 2000)

including those on the appeal property and its neighbour to the east, No 234 Shepherds Lane.

6. Not only would the proposed roof appear bulky and top heavy, but the proposed alterations would erode the distinctive V-shaped roof level gaps, interrupting the existing rhythm of the roofscape here. To the right hand side, views of the distinctive chimney stack on the appeal property against the sky would also be lost. The drawings and rendered elevations at Appendix 2 of the appellant's written statement clearly demonstrate these impacts.
7. I recognise that No 244 Shepherds Lane, within this run of properties, has a gable to one side. However, not only is that property near to the end of this run of dwellings (as opposed to being more centrally located) but it has a different relationship with its neighbour from that of No 236 and its neighbours, in that it is separated by the width of an access drive. As such, a meaningful gap exists between those properties at roof level, notwithstanding the gable. The appeal property is much closer to its neighbours, being separated only by the width of side pedestrian gates. Whilst No 232 has been extended to the side at first floor level, that extension has a pitched roof over, maintaining the V-shaped gap in the roofscape. Neither sets a precedent for the appeal scheme.
8. Other properties in the locality that have a gabled roof form were also drawn to my attention. I recognise, in this regard, that gabled roofs are not completely absent in the wider street scene. However, the site-specific circumstances of those properties are not directly comparable with the appeal property, with none located within a long run of similar properties, where the design cohesion of the rhythm created by the hipped roofs is an integral part of the character and appearance of the area. I confirm, in this regard, that I have dealt with the appeal proposal on its own merits.

Overall Planning Balance and Conclusion

9. The development proposed would materially erode the space that exists at roof level between the detached dwellings within this run of properties, a feature which I consider important in maintaining the established character and appearance of the street scene within this part of the ASRC. That harm brings it into conflict with policies M1 and M10 of the Dartford Local Plan to 2037 which, together and among other things, require that new development reinforce and enhance positive aspects of the locality, including the historical pattern and form of development.
10. Whilst the plans show two bedrooms in the roof space, I saw that the one to the left-hand side has limited useable floorspace because of the roof slopes, with the headroom to the space on the right making it only really useable as storage space. I recognise, in this regard, that the development would provide more useable accommodation to help meet the changing needs of the family. However, such needs are essentially temporary, whilst the proposed development would be permanent. In this instance, I do not consider those needs to be sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Jennifer A Vyse
INSPECTOR