



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 May 2025

by Megan Thomas K.C. Barrister-at-Law

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/25/3363673

18 Semaphore Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3PT

- 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 & Mrs J Hovington against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application ref. is 24/P/01694.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a new side extension to form a garage and construction of a new rooftop lantern.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a new side extension to form a garage, and the construction of a new rooftop lantern at 18 Semaphore Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3PT in accordance with the terms of planning application ref.24/P/01694 dated 19 November 2024 subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 10712-09 Site Location Plan And Site Block Plan, 10712-05 REV A Elevations As Existing, 10712-06 REV A Floor Plans As Existing, 10712-07 REV A Elevations As Proposed & 10712-08 REV B Floor Plans As Proposed.
 - 4) The windows of south-west facing elevation of the roof lantern hereby permitted shall be obscurely glazed and fixed shut and shall be permanently retained in that condition thereafter.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed roof lantern on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey detached dwelling built to a high quality, located on the north-western side of Semaphore Road in a built-up and central area of

Guildford. The road is made up of predominantly residential dwellings of two storeys in differing plot sizes. There is an infant's school opposite the appeal site with flat roofs. The road is on an incline with no.16a Semaphore Road sitting on lower land than the appeal site.

4. The development proposed consists of a single storey extension to the north-east side adjacent to no.16a Semaphore Road and alterations to the roof near its south-western end involving the construction of a roof top room in the shape of a roof lantern. It is proposed to use the room as a home office.
5. The proposed side extension would have a flat roof and would be used as a garage. It is acceptable to the Council. It would be forward of the building line of no.16a but it would not result in an undue loss of outlook or light for the occupants of that dwelling. Overall, I see no reason to disagree with the Council's lack of objection to the proposed garage.
6. The roof lantern room would have a hipped roof over a rectangular structure measuring about 5m by about 3m. It would have a run of windows on each elevation. All windows except the south-west facing run of windows (facing no.20 Semaphore Road) would be fixed shut and fitted with obscured glass. It would be constructed using materials which matched the main house.
7. Supplementary Planning Document *Residential Extensions and Alterations* indicates that changing the height or form of a roof will not usually be acceptable in areas where roof pitches and heights in the streetscape are consistent. My site visit confirmed that views of the streetscape of Semaphore Road are strongly influenced by the fact that it is in parts steep and gently curving. There are no particularly lengthy vistas of dwelling roofs taking in no.18's roofscape with its neighbours. There are glimpses of nos 20 and 18 together and the difference between the traditional pitch of no.20 and the proposed roof lantern on no.18 would be appreciated. However, that would not amount to harm to the character or appearance of the streetscene. There is no strong visible rhythm or consistency with which the proposed roof lantern would jar. The wider area displays a few non-pitched roof forms and, whilst the lantern form is not typical of buildings in the area, it blends well with the existing design of the appeal dwelling. The character and appearance of the road and wider area can absorb the proposed roof design without resulting harm.
8. In addition to that, the proposed lantern would not be unduly high or wide. The 3m widths would face the front and rear and the apex of the hipped roof of the lantern would be lower than the top of the adjacent chimney to its south-west. These factors would increase the sympathetic incorporation of the roof lantern into the host dwelling and wider area.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not harm the character or appearance of the host dwelling or the streetscene and would not be in conflict with policy D1 of the Guildford Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (adopted 2019), policies H4 and D4 of the Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (adopted 2023) or the *Residential Extensions and Alterations* SPD (2018).

Conditions

10. Some planning conditions were suggested in the event that the appeal was successful. I have considered these in the light of Planning Practice Guidance. I have imposed a condition specifying that the scheme be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, for the avoidance of doubt. I have also imposed a materials condition requiring matching materials to be used in the developments, in order to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings.
11. To protect the living conditions of the occupants of no.20 Semaphore Road, there is a condition which requires the south west facing run of windows in the proposed roof lantern to be fitted with obscured glass and fixed shut. The separation distances between the other proposed runs of windows and the private amenity spaces of other adjacent dwellings are generous enough to avoid any undue loss of privacy.

Conclusion

12. Having considered all representations made, for the reasons given above, I allow the appeal.

Megan Thomas K.C.
Inspector