
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 April 2025 by R Parker BSc (Hons)

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/25/3358914

17 Fairfax Road, Old Woking, Woking, Surrey GU22 9HN

- 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 P Connett against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2024/0801.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed dormers to East and West elevations'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surrounding area; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers at 19 Fairfax Road (no 19), with regard to light and outlook.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises a bungalow, which has been previously extended to the side and rear, and includes additional accommodation within the roof space. It lies in a pleasant residential street typified by one- and two-storey detached and semi-detached dwellings generally spaced modestly, which are of similar era and appearance, and a rhythmic roofscape created by the combination of repeated hipped and gabled roofs. Many nearby houses have been altered or extended without affecting the cohesive character of the area.
5. The proposed dormers would only be set down from the roof's ridge line by a marginal amount, and the positioning of dormers above the flat-roofed side extension would give an impression of a two-storey flat roofed extension. The excessive bulk and massing to the roof would harmfully dominate the host property, resulting in an unbalanced and top-heavy appearance, which would detract from and fail to remain subservient to the appeal dwelling. By reason of their excessive

scale, the proposed dormers would also appear unduly prominent within the street scene and out of keeping with the traditional pattern of development which characterises the surrounding area.

6. While I do not have specific details of the alterations and extensions made to no 19 before me, and therefore am unable to draw a full comparison with the appeal scheme, I have noted their minor similarities. However, the dormers at no 19 are substantially smaller than those in the proposal and have been set within the existing roof slope, demonstrating some degree of subservience and retaining a balanced appearance to the roof. In addition, the Council have explained that in that case a fallback position had been established via the provision of a Lawful Development Certificate. The circumstances of this particular scheme do not therefore represent a direct parallel to the proposal before me.
7. The scale, bulk and positioning of the proposed additions, would result in an incongruous and dominating built form, detracting from the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surrounding area. Therefore, the appeal scheme would fail to accord with Policies CS21 (Design) and CS24 (Woking's Landscape and Townscape) of the Woking Core Strategy – October 2012 (CS), the Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – February 2015, and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). Together, these support development which respects, protects, and contributes positively to the street scene and character of its surrounding area.

Living conditions

8. The appeal scheme would introduce a significant built form at first floor level, particularly as the proposed dormers would extend onto the host property's side extension. As a result, and due to the existing dormers at no 19 and the narrowness of the spacing between the houses, this would bring the proposed development in close proximity to this neighbouring dwelling. During my site visit I confirmed that the existing dormers at no 19 facing towards the appeal site serve a bathroom and a bedroom. The bathroom window is obscure glazed with a high opening, and therefore would be minimally affected by the proposal.
9. However, the outlook from the bedroom would become significantly restricted as a result of the development. As detailed in the Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight SPD (February 2022), bedrooms are regarded as habitable rooms. This, combined with the reduced separation distance between the properties, would create an overbearing, enclosing effect which would be detrimental to the living conditions of these neighbouring residents. The proposal would lead to a concurrent loss of light, as illustrated by the Council's assessment that the development would breach the 25-degree 'rule', in respect of which no contrary evidence has been presented.
10. These factors would result in an unacceptably harmful effect on the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers of no 19, with regard to light and outlook. The proposal therefore conflicts with CS Policy CS21 (Design), the Design SPD and the Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight SPD, and paragraph 135 of the Framework which, collectively, seek developments whose relationship with adjoining properties avoids harm with regard to privacy, light, or an overbearing effect due to bulk, proximity, or outlook.

Other Matters

11. I have had regard to the privacy concerns raised by an interested party regarding the proposed window in the front elevation of the appeal property. The Council did not object to this aspect of the proposal, due to the separation distance that would be retained between the front elevation of the appeal property and the dwelling on the opposite side of the road. There are no reasons for me to disagree with this assessment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. I have had regard to the appellant's need for additional accommodation, but this is outweighed by the harm I have identified. There are no material considerations, which indicate that the appeal should be determined, other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Parker

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR