
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2025

by **L Gardner MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/W/25/3367929

Rose Cottage, Eden Vale, Dormans Park, Surrey RH19 2LT

- 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 and Mrs Talbot against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/149.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a replacement self build dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The site is within the Green Belt where the fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Nevertheless, the Council has accepted that the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt on the basis that it would replace an existing building in the same use, without being materially larger. Based on the evidence before me, I see no reason to reach a different judgement on this matter.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is within Dormans Park which has a sub-urban character comprising of spacious residential plots set within landscaped grounds. Dwellings in the area are typically detached two storey properties, many with detached ancillary outbuildings. There is no strong uniformity to the design of properties, albeit the majority have traditional proportions with pitched and hipped roofs. Sitings within plots are generally sporadic creating little consistency between the set back from the highway edge.
5. The site occupies a corner plot at the junction of Eden Vale and Plas Newydd. The existing dwelling within the plot is two storeys with roof dormers and single storey elements including a steeply pitched octagonal roof. The plot also accommodates two separate detached garage buildings. The siting of the dwelling is close to the boundary with Plas Newydd, albeit the main vehicular access is taken from Eden Vale. The existing dwelling is typical of the style of property in the wider area and consequently has a relatively neutral impact on the wider street scene.

6. The proposed replacement dwelling would sit in broadly the same position as the existing dwelling within the site, albeit set back further from the highway boundary. The width and depth of the footprint would be comparable to the existing dwelling, if anything being narrower when taken in the context of the demolition of one of the garage buildings. This corresponds with the Council's assessment in relation to the Green Belt, in which it concluded the proposed dwelling would not be materially larger. On this basis I find no harm arising from the siting or footprint of the proposal.
7. The overall pitch height of the proposal would be lower than the existing dwelling. However, the eaves would increase, creating a much shallower roof pitch. Rather than simply moderating the height of the dwelling, the result of this roof pitch is that the overall bulk and massing of the proposed dwelling would appear much larger than the existing dwelling. In the existing dwelling, parts of the first floor are served by roof dormers which lessens the visual dominance of the building. To the contrary, the first floor of the proposed dwelling would be much more prominent, particularly on the southern elevation where full height glazing is proposed.
8. I acknowledge that the proposal would be read in the context of existing large dwellings and mature landscaping, which would reduce visibility in longer views. Nevertheless, the proposal would be visible from various vantage points noting the corner positioning of the plot. Whilst the existing dwelling is already visible above the perimeter hedge, based on the assessment above, the massing of the proposal would increase the overall prominence.
9. The contextual drawing provided only serves to demonstrate that despite the lower overall pitch height, the height of the eaves would create a squat roof appearance which would be at odds with the more traditional pitched and hipped roof forms in the area, despite the various examples of much more substantially sized dwellings.
10. The appellant has presented that the design of the dwelling has taken cues from Italian cultural heritage, both in acknowledgement of the appellant's personal connections to Italy, but also in reference to East Grinstead being twinned with a village in Italy. It is stated that Dormans Park was originally designed with influences from classic Italian villa architecture. Even if this were to be the case, these influences no longer remain notable features within the surrounding area, which as above is more typically characterised by dwellings of traditional design.
11. Policy CSP18 of the Tandridge Core Strategy (TCS) (2008) states that the Council will require new development to be of a high standard of design that must reflect and respect the character, setting and local context. Policy DP7 of the Tandridge Local Plan (TLP) Part 2 (2014) requires amongst other matters, for development to integrate effectively with its surroundings, reinforcing local distinctiveness and landscape character. It states that innovative designs will be encouraged where appropriate.
12. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that significant weight should be given to outstanding or innovative design which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings. Thus, whilst innovative design should not be stifled, there is still a requirement to take account of the established form of the surrounding area.

13. The design and scale of the proposal would be significantly at odds with the established character and appearance of the surrounding area, even in the acknowledgement of the varying forms of development in the area. The impact of this would be exacerbated given the positioning of the dwelling within a corner plot which would increase its overall visibility and prominence. The proposal would therefore have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policy DP7 of the TLP and Policy CSP18 of the TCS.

Other Matters

14. The proposal would be acceptable against a number of factors including living conditions of neighbouring properties, highway matters, trees and ecology. Nevertheless, the absence of harm in these respects does not weigh in favour of the proposal.
15. The proposal relates to a replacement dwelling and therefore would not lead to a net increase in housing supply. I note however that the existing dwelling is suffering from subsidence and damp issues. There would therefore be benefits associated with the proposal in providing a dwelling which better reflects current standards as well as introducing sustainability factors such as increased insulation and solar panels. I have given these benefits limited weight. Nevertheless, they are not sufficient to outweigh the harm which I have identified to the character and appearance of the area, to which I have given significant weight.

Conclusion

16. I have concluded that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

L Gardner

INSPECTOR