



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2025

by **H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/25/3373958

Briarwood, Oak Hill Road, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, Essex, RM4 1JJ

- 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 William Taylor against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/1284/25.
 - The development proposed is replacement rear ground floor extension. Rear roof dormer including hip to gable conversion. Single front roof dormer window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to rear roof dormer including hip to gable conversion and single front roof dormer window. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted insofar as it relates to replacement rear ground floor extension at Briarwood, Oak Hill Road, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, Essex, RM4 1JJ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref EPF/1284/25, and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted, and 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted: 645-100; 645-201; 645-204; 645-205; and 645-206.
 - 3) 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal site and the wider street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is one of four detached houses on a private road parallel to, and reached from, Oak Hill Road. Briarwood is the most prominent of the group, being set closest to the road entrance and on higher ground than the neighbouring properties, and with a roof ridge height noticeably above that of the neighbouring house, 'Woodberry'. Although the roadside has mature screen planting, Briarwood is visible in the street scene due to the openness across the roadway entrance.

4. Oak Hill Road has a diverse mix of houses in terms of design and scale. This group of four are individually designed but are of similar scale and form. Three of the four, including the appeal property, have half-hipped roofs, with Woodberry having side gables. Within the wider street scene there are a mix of roof forms, including dormer windows, although these are less prevalent in the roofspace of two-storey dwellings.
5. Given the array of roof styles, in principle the extension of the roof hips to create gable sides would not be out of keeping in the street scene. In isolation, it would not materially increase the massing of the property. However, combined with the proposed front and rear dormer windows it would add to the bulk of the roof, and the perception of a third floor of accommodation in a group of two-storey houses. The roof ridge of Briarwood is higher than the neighbouring house and bungalow, and the proposed extensions would add to its prominence in the street scene. Although set in from the side roof eaves, as a result of its depth and height the proposed rear dormer would be apparent on approach from the east.
6. Amongst other criteria, Policy DM9 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan¹ (LP) requires development proposals to relate positively to their locality having regard to matters including building heights, and the form, scale and massing around the site. In particular, extensions are required to respect and/or complement the form and detailing of the original buildings. In this case, the dormer windows would not respect the two-storey design and form of the host house and would introduce elements at odds with its architecture. This would not be mitigated by the use of matching materials. Although the appellant refers to front dormers at Woodberry, these are positioned at first-floor level, below the ridge of the front gable wing, and do not create the perception of a third level of accommodation. As such, they offer limited support to the proposal.
7. The appellant has drawn attention to other dormer windows in the area. However, with a couple of notable exceptions, these are generally set within the roofslopes of single- or 1½-storey properties, and do not appear prominent in the street scene. A modern development off Abbotts Way appears to incorporate small dormer windows as original design features. These front dormer windows are set within simple roof planes and are not 'slotted' between prominent gables. Most rear dormer windows in the area also appear to be modest pitched roof features, rather than wide, flat-roofed additions; and without an incongruous mix of pitches and flat-roof, as proposed in this case. As such, the examples cited are materially different from the appeal proposal in their form and/or visual impact.
8. A prominent example of second-floor dormer windows is at 'Woodlands', a short distance from the appeal site. Limited information has been supplied about the associated planning permission, ref. EPF/2908/18, but from the reference number it would appear to pre-date the adoption of the current local plan and its policies. On the basis of the information supplied, the justification for that development is not known, but viewed at the appeal site visit it did not appear to be typical of the prevailing pattern in the street scene. As such, I consider that it offers limited support to the proposal.
9. The appellant indicates that the rear dormer with the conversion of the hip-to-gable roof could be built as Permitted Development (PD). No information has been

¹ Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011 – 2033 Part One, adopted March 2023

supplied to confirm that the dwelling has its PD rights intact, or if there are any restrictive planning conditions in place. No Certificate of Lawful Development has been issued to indicate that part of the proposal could be constructed without express planning permission. However, were this to be a fallback position, I consider that a loft conversion without the proposed front dormer window would be less visually harmful to the dwelling and the street scene than the appeal scheme. As such, the suggested fallback option would not justify the proposal.

10. I note that the purpose of the proposals is to provide essential living space for the appellant's growing family, enabling them to remain in their home and community. I accept that extending the property could make more efficient use of land. However, these benefits would not outweigh the visual harm identified above and would not constitute sustainable development.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed roof extensions would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal site and the wider street scene, and would conflict with LP Policy DM9.
12. However, I consider the proposed replacement rear extension to be acceptable in design terms, in relation to neighbouring dwellings, and in all other respects. As it is clearly severable from the roof extensions, and both physically and functionally independent, I propose to issue a split decision.

Other Matters

13. Representations were made to the original planning application raising concerns including the effect of the proposal on light and privacy. However, given the relative position of buildings and the proposed extensions, I am satisfied that the living conditions of neighbouring residents would not be materially harmed. Other issues raised such as property values and access to the private road during construction are civil matters beyond the scope of this appeal. Theoretical future use of the appeal property is not a matter for consideration in this appeal.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard time limit, I have attached a condition specifying the approved drawings as this provides certainty. It is also appropriate to control materials to match the existing dwelling, in order to safeguard the appearance of the development.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed in part and dismissed in part.

H Lock

INSPECTOR