



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2026

by **E Everitt BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/25/3375897

60 Hazelwick Road, Three Bridges, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 1LZ

- 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 Ms Julie O'Brien against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is CR/2025/0272/FUL.
 - The development proposed is part demolition and alterations to existing rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Ms Julie O'Brien against Crawley Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. An appeal relating to a previous planning application for a loft conversion with dormer on the appeal site was dismissed in 2025¹. The appeal scheme proposes a rear dormer of reduced scale compared to the previous proposal and the dormer I observed during my site visit. My decision is made on the basis of the proposal before me, not the respective merits of any alternative scheme.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hazelwick Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a 2-storey terraced dwelling located within an area which is predominantly residential in character. The surrounding area is characterised by built form of a broadly consistent scale, form and design. This includes in respect of the roofscape which comprises broadly uniform simple pitched forms with a limited number of alterations, principally rooflights, visible within the street scene.
6. The property is located within the Hazelwick Road Conservation Area (CA). As such, I have a statutory duty under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings

¹ APP/Q3820/D/24/3347548

and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

7. The special interest and significance of the CA result predominantly from the form and massing of the built environment constructed during the Victorian and Edwardian eras associated with the development of the nearby Three Bridges railway junction and station. I observed on site that there is a formal urban structure to the CA, with buildings of a consistent scale and massing, uniform building lines and continuity of frontages along Hazelwick Road. While the Hazelwick Road frontage makes a particularly strong contribution to the character and appearance of the CA, the built form as a whole contributes to the special interest and significance of the CA, signifying the historic association of the area with the development of the railway.
8. The appeal property contributes positively to the character and appearance of the CA by reason of its scale and form being consistent with that of the surrounding area and evocative of its history.
9. The proposed dormer addition would be sited to the rear of the property and not be visible from Hazelwick Road. Nonetheless, by reason of its scale it would appear as an incongruous and unduly prominent addition to the rear of the property, visible from several private vantage points. The dormer would extend across the full width of the rear roofslope, contrary to the guidance provided within the Council's Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (2016). It would also project above the ridge line of the rear outrigger and fail to align with the fenestration on the existing property. As a result of this, the dormer would appear as a disproportionate and dominant addition to the roof, detracting from the character and appearance of the host building.
10. The proposed development would use materials which respect the character of the area, as well as its historic context. Nevertheless, the proposed dormer would be a dominant and visually discordant addition to the appeal property, detracting from the simple, broadly uniform roofscape which is characteristic of the CA. Consequently, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the significance of the CA.
11. My attention has been drawn to the rear dormer at 58 Hazelwick Road. While I do not have full details of the case before me, there are some commonalities between that dormer and the appeal scheme, including in respect of form and materials. However, from the information before me, it appears that the dormer at No 58 was constructed prior to the designation of the CA. In this regard, the context within which it would have been considered differs markedly to that for the appeal scheme. In any event, each case must be considered on its own individual circumstances, and I have identified above why the appeal proposal would be harmful.
12. I observed during my site visit that there are other examples of dormers along Hazelwick Road, including at Nos 57, 59, 63, 67 and 102. I do not have sufficient details of these cases before me to enable a meaningful comparison with the appeal proposal. In some cases, it is also unclear from the information before me whether the dormers were constructed prior to the designation of the CA. Irrespective of this, from my observations on site it is evident that, in general, the existing dormers are smaller in scale than the appeal proposal, thereby appearing

less prominent. The appellant also highlights a live planning application relating to a proposed dormer at No 106. However, the dormer at No 106 does not yet benefit from planning permission. As such, these matters do not alter my assessment of the appeal proposal.

13. Similarly, the conclusions drawn in respect of the dormer proposal at 27 Norfolk Road in Horsham District, following assessment against the development plan policies of that District, do not lead me to an alternative conclusion, notwithstanding that the proposal is also located within a Conservation Area.
14. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
15. The Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance require the category of harm to be explicitly identified, and the extent of harm within that category to be clearly articulated. Given the scale and siting of the proposed development, I find that the harm to the significance of the CA would be at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm. Nonetheless, the harm is of considerable importance and weight.
16. Paragraph 215 of the Framework sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
17. The proposal would provide additional living accommodation at the appeal property. However, the benefits associated with this are primarily private benefits to the appellant. There would be some economic benefits arising from the construction of the development, albeit these would be limited given the scale of the proposal. The appellant suggests that the construction impacts associated with the appeal proposal would be less than those associated with the previous proposal, given the reduction in scale, thereby resulting in public benefits. Due to the modest scale of the development, construction impacts would likely be time-limited in any event, with the benefits accruing from the reduced-scale proposal, therefore, limited.
18. Collectively, these public benefits are of limited weight. In this case, mindful of my duties under the Act, I conclude that the public benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the CA that I have identified above. Accordingly, they do not provide a clear and convincing justification for the harm to the CA. In this regard, the proposal conflicts with the relevant provisions of Policies DD1, HA1 and HA2 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023 to 2040 (adopted 2024). In summary, these policies seek to ensure that development complements the existing setting and character of the area and that heritage assets' key features or significance are conserved and enhanced as a result of development.

Other Matters

19. The Council raises no objections in respect of the impact of the proposal on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties. Nevertheless, this matter does not lead me to an alternative conclusion on the main issue. Similarly, the

representations from neighbours in support of the proposal and the absence of objections from the Hazelwick Conservation Area Advisory Committee do not render the scheme acceptable and are a neutral factor in my decision.

20. The appellant advises that they would accept minor amendments to the proposal or planning conditions if they would render the proposal acceptable. However, my assessment is based on the proposal before me. Moreover, there are no planning conditions which I could impose which would overcome the harm I have identified above in respect of character and appearance.
21. I acknowledge the frustration of the appellant regarding the Council's approach to the application, and the associated effects on their mental and physical health. Nonetheless, I have assessed the appeal on the basis of the plans before me. Ultimately, these matters do not lead me to an alternative conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

E Everitt

INSPECTOR