



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 March 2026

by F Leung BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th April 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/D/25/3376126

26 Church Road, Epsom, Surrey KT17 4DX

- 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 Krukowski against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00996/FLH.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as “loft conversion”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Notwithstanding the description of development set out above, which is taken from the application form, it is clear from the plans and accompanying details that the proposal comprises the alteration of roof from hip to gable end; rear roof extension (involving conversion of roofspace to habitable use) and installation of one rooflight to front roofslope. The Council dealt with the proposal on this basis and so shall I.
3. The appeal site is within the Pikes Hill Conservation Area (the CA). The statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, with particular regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.

Reasons

5. The appeal property together with 20-24 Church Road, forms a two-storey terrace comprising 4 late-19th century paired-brick cottages. Mindful of the CA's Character Appraisal and Management Proposals (2010) (the Character Appraisal), the special interest and significance of the CA are largely derived from a variety of modest residential developments ranging from originally isolated cottages of the early/mid-19th century to the later more urban terraces built around the arrival of the railway in the late 19th century. Although styles vary across the CA, each terrace and semi-detached pair reads as a cohesive set, with a generally consistent architectural language and built form. The appeal property contributes positively to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole, and therefore to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

6. The appeal property is at the end of the terrace sharing a common main hipped roof. Buildings in this terrace are identified in the Character Appraisal as 'positive buildings'. This terrace, together with another terrace of 6 houses at 7-17 Church Road, shares consistent bay features, a strong building line, and a symmetrical hipped-roof form. To the south of the appeal site are 3 pairs of semi-detached dwellings of different styles, but each pair has a broadly symmetrical roof form.
7. The proposed extension would convert the hipped roof of the appeal property to gable-end. The end-of-terrace location, with a building line angled towards the road, makes the flank wall and hipped roof of the appeal property particularly prominent in the street scene. The proposed gable end and rear dormer window would be highly visible from the south along Church Road and from the north-east on Pikes Hill Road, across rear gardens. Although the historic ridge level would remain unchanged, the proposed extension would result in the loss of the original symmetrical roof form of Nos 20-26, unbalancing the existing terrace roofscape. This alteration would appear incongruous and at odds with the established pattern of development within the surrounding area.
8. I accept that there are elements of the Council's Householder Application: Supplementary Planning Guidance (2004) (the SPD) with which the proposed development, in particular the proposed rear dormer window, may comply. However, the SPD also explicitly states that hip to gable-end conversions would only be allowed where the street character would not be adversely affected by asymmetrical roofs. In this instance, the proposed development would not comply with the SPD.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to nearby built and approved developments including a supermarket opposite the site, a school and other modern developments with varied character and roof forms. Although limited information has been provided, many of these examples fall outside the CA or are of an entirely different nature. As such, they are not directly comparable with the scheme before me. Within the CA, while some gable ends exist, roof form is generally consistent within each historic pair or terrace. An apparent exception is the semi-detached pair at 92 and 94 Upper High Street, where the hipped roof at No 92 has been converted to a gable. However, I do not have the full details of the circumstances leading to that development or the planning balance undertaken there. This example is therefore not directly comparable to the appeal proposal. In any case, this exception should not be treated as a precedent to permit similar proposals which would further erode the integrity of CA.
10. In isolation, the proposed rear dormer would read as a subordinate and traditional addition, consistent with other rear dormers on this terrace. However, neither the acceptability of the rear dormer in isolation nor the presence of varied roof forms elsewhere justifies the harm that would arise from the proposed hip-to-gable conversion.
11. Accordingly, the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, in conflict with the requirements of Section 72(1) of the Act.

12. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) describes heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource, that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 212 of the Framework is clear 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.
13. Given the scale and nature of the proposed development, it would cause 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the CA, at the lower end of the spectrum. Nevertheless, this harm is of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 215 of the Framework states that in these circumstances, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
14. I acknowledge that the proposed extension would provide additional living space at the existing dwelling. However, this would mainly benefit the existing occupiers and offer limited public benefits. It does not outweigh the harm to the significance of the CA, for which great weight should be given as required by the Framework.
15. Overall, the proposed extension would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, and would fail to preserve the CA. This is contrary to Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document (2015). These policies, in summary, seek high-quality design and require that the design and scale of development conserves and enhances the Borough's historic environment.

Other Matters

16. The Council raises no objection regarding the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in respect of privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight, noise and disturbance. I acknowledge that the Council has concluded that the proposal would not harmfully affect protected species, the ecological significance of the site or natural on-site infiltration. Based on the evidence before me, I see no basis to reach a different conclusion. I also note that there is no objection from the neighbours. Nevertheless, a lack of harm is effectively neutral in my determination of the appeal and does not weigh in favour of allowing the appeal or alter my overall conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, the Framework, and it would not be in accordance with the development plan, when read as a whole. Therefore, having considered all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

F Leung

INSPECTOR