

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
222963	EXT	Earley	Maiden Erlegh;

Applicant	Mr and Mrs Khangura
Site Address	72 Sutcliffe Avenue, Earley, RG6 7JN
Proposal	(Part-retrospective) Householder application for the proposed insertion of a dormer window into the existing loft conversion and roof alterations.
Type	Householder
Officer	Kieran Neumann
Reason for determination by committee	Listed by Councillor Mike Smith

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday 11 January 2023
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place and Growth
RECOMMENDATION	APPROVAL subject to the conditions and informatives included in Appendix 1.

SUMMARY

This application is a resubmission of a retrospective scheme recently refused in September 2022 (application reference: 221978). The application was refused on the grounds that the dormer, by reason of its contrived design, flat roof, elevated position and prominent corner location, was out of keeping with the host dwelling and subsequently was of detriment to the character of the area. This application revises the design of the dormer by setting it in from the eastern side elevation of the dwelling's gable roof and reinstating the taller hipped roof form of side extension as approved under application 202186.

The revised design of the dormer is now considered sufficiently proportionate to the host dwelling and is in-keeping with the form of other flat roof dormers in the area. It demonstrates compliance with a number of the Borough Design Guide's recommendations for a dormer of its style. The proposals would also not adversely impact the amenities of the surrounding neighbours.

Subject to the conditions and informatives outlined in Appendix 1, this application is recommended for approval.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
193174	Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension including 3no roof lights and single storey front extension to create porch plus changes to fenestration.	Refused 05/02/2020

202186	Householder application for the proposed erection of single storey front extension to form a porch, a two storey side and single storey rear extension, conversion of the loft, plus addition of 4 no. rooflights and a new boundary wall/fence.	Approved 28/10/2020
220742	Application for non-material amendment to planning consent 202186 to allow changes to fenestration and alterations to external materials (brick and roof tiles). (Part retrospective)	Approved 22/04/2022
220780	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a dormer to the rear main roof to create habitable accommodation and single storey outbuilding to the rear of the dwelling for a use incidental to the use of the host dwelling.	Split Decision (Outbuilding approved, Dormer refused) 14/04/2022
221978	Householder application for the proposed insertion of 1no. rear dormer (retrospective).	Refused 12/09/2022

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION	
Existing parking spaces	3
Proposed parking spaces	3
CONSTRAINTS	Major Development Location - Earley

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Enforcement	The dormer was requested to be removed following the refusal of application 221978, but the applicant wanted to address the design concerns and resubmit.

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council:

Recommend Refusal - Due to the large dominant nature of the proposed rear dormer, prominent on this corner location, particularly when viewed from the rear, in Meadow Road, where the property would appear elevated, exaggerating its mass and dominance. Even if the roof to the side extension is reconstructed as originally approved under 202186, the edge of the dormer would sit on the verge of the higher roof and be visible when viewed from the front. The proposal is contrary to Policy CP3, being of an inappropriate scale, mass, built form, height and character, to the detriment of the general street scene. In addition the proposals are not sympathetic to the surrounding built environment or host dwelling and are inappropriate, contrary to Section 12 of the NPPF 2021.

ETC are also concerned that the hip roof over the recent side extension, as originally approved under 202186, does not appear to have been constructed as per the approved drawings in that rear slope of the roof is not in a continuous plane with that of the host

dwelling and causes an incongruous step in the roof, as a result, ETC would request enforcement action to remedy this incorrectly constructed roof. ***(Officer comment: The revised and re-instated hipped roof approved under application 202186 is yet to be constructed. If this step-in on the roof remains following permission being given, enforcement action will likely be taken.)***

Local Members:

Councillor Mike Smith – *"The dormer that has been unlawfully constructed was refused permission under a previous application for the following reasons "The proposed rear dormer, by reason of its contrived design, flat roof, elevated position and prominent corner location, is out of keeping with the host dwelling" This application appears to propose the eastern side to be set back by 150-200 mm from its current position as new the gable end wall. This is a minute change and is unlikely to make any substantial or discernible change to the appearance from the street and therefore the reasons from the previous refusal equally apply to this application in my opinion."*

Neighbours:

Six letters of objection on the following grounds:

- Dormer out of proportion
- Dormer is too large
- Overlooking
- Out of character with the area
- Visually dominant
- Overbearing
- Parking concerns
- Overdevelopment
- Hoarding on the front boundary has not been applied for and hasn't been subject to consultation. ***(Officer comment: This does not relate to the proposals applied for and is therefore not a relevant material planning consideration.)***

One letter of support received which stated the following:

"I would like to comment in support of this application. My house is attached to the property in question and I am the closest neighbour. The dormer at no 72 Sutcliffe Avenue is similar in both size and construction to many others in the locality including several in both Sutcliffe Avenue and Meadow Road."

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework
National Design Guide
National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development
CP3 – General Principles for Development
CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
CP7 – Biodiversity

CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals

MDD Local Plan (MDD

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC02 – Development Limits

CC06 – Noise

CC07 – Parking

CC09 – Development and Flood Risk

CC10 – Sustainable Drainage

TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

CIL Guidance + 123 List

National Design Guide

PLANNING ISSUES

1. This application is a resubmission of a scheme recently refused in September 2022 (application reference: 221978). The application was refused on the following grounds:
 - The proposed rear dormer, by reason of its contrived design, flat roof, elevated position and prominent corner location, is out of keeping with the host dwelling. As a result, it would fail to protect and enhance the built environment, to the detriment of the prevailing character of the area. These proposals would therefore be contrary to policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, R23 of the Borough Design Guide, the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.
2. The amendments made to the scheme following this application consist of the following:
 - Dormer window set in from the side of the dwelling's roof;
 - Taller hipped roof form of side extension reinstated as approved under application 202186

Site Description:

3. The host dwelling is a 1950's style two-storey bay fronted brick and tile semi-detached dwelling. The dwelling has undergone numerous alterations in recent years with the addition of a two-storey side extension, single storey rear extension, outbuilding and most recently a loft conversion which has been facilitated by a conversion of the dwelling's hipped roof to a gable, plus the unlawful construction of a flat roofed rear dormer, the subject of this application.
4. The application site occupies a large corner plot with frontages to both Sutcliffe Avenue and Meadow Road. The site is also well elevated and occupies a prominent visual position in the streetscape and roofscape of the surrounding area.

5. The surrounding dwellings are a mixture of two-storey detached dwellings, two storey semi-detached dwellings, single-storey bungalows and chalet bungalows. There is little uniformity in the architectural design of dwellings in the area.

Character of the Area:

6. The proposed dormer window is now proposed to be set in from the eastern side of the roof, removing the currently squared off eastern elevation. This is a positive change in the design and demonstrates compliance with the Borough Design Guide, which states *'dormer windows should generally be positioned within the main roof, by being set back from both eaves line and the sides of the roof.'* (page 57, section 4.11 of the Borough Design Guide).
7. The dormer is also set down from the ridge line of the host dwelling, which again demonstrates compliance with the Borough Design Guide which states *"Loft conversions and dormer windows should not project above the existing ridge line."* (page 57, section 4.11 of the Borough Design Guide).
8. The set in from the side of the roof reduces the massing and bulk of the dormer and would help partly obscure its form from the street scene. The dormer, in terms of size, is proportionate to the host dwelling. The site's elevated and corner position does certainly emphasise the dormer's visual prominence, but it is not considered that this alone can substantiate a reason for refusal.
9. A number of objections have been received on the grounds that the dormer is out of character with the area. The 3D image below of the host dwelling and the surrounding roofscape demonstrates the overwhelming prevalence of flat roof dormers in the immediate vicinity of the application site:



10. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area. The National Design Guide section B1, paragraph 67 states that the built form of

well-designed places should relate well to the site, its context and the opportunities they present and the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place.

11. Based on the above assessment, it is clear to see that the dormer is sufficiently in-keeping with the character of the area and therefore compliant with the relevant policies. The fact that its naturally elevated position with the street scene increases its prominence should not by itself substantiate a reason for refusal when the proposals demonstrate clear compliance with the Borough Design Guide for a dormer of this style. Furthermore, the dormer evidently mirrors the form of multiple other flat roof dormers on Sutcliffe Avenue and Meadow Road.
12. The proposed roof alterations would reinstate the taller hipped roof approved under application 202186. This roof form appears much more subservient to the host dwelling when compared with the lower hip that has recently been constructed, and its increased height would further obscure the form of the dormer to the rear.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

13. The constructed dormer overlooks the roof form of the adjacent no.22 Meadow Road and part of their rear garden, with a minimum separation distance of approximately 16.5 metres from the nearest impacted rooflight on no.22 Meadow Road's northern side elevation and the neighbour's rear garden. Page 47 of the Borough Design Guide outlines the minimum recommended separation distances to maintain privacy and limit sense of enclosure and for dwellings over two storeys, the back to flank distance recommendation is a minimum of 15 metres which the proposals are compliant with. Furthermore, the rooflight that would be impacted is obscured so overlooking opportunities are negligible.
14. The subtext for page 47 of the Borough Design Guide states "*character and context will also be relevant to the approach in any specific case*". This is acknowledged, and in this instance the arc of outlook from the second storey fenestration would be no greater than that of the first floor rear fenestration that exists currently. The height of the dormer would sufficiently skew and obscure any views of no.22 Meadow Road from the windows proposed.

Overbearing

15. As outlined in paragraph 13, to maintain privacy and limit sense of enclosure the Borough Design Guide recommends a minimum back to flank separation distance of 15 metres. The separation distance proposed exceeds this and therefore, whilst the dormer is visually prominent when viewed within the context of the wider street scene, it is not considered that the dormer is unduly overbearing on the surrounding neighbours.

Loss of light

16. There are no concerns on these grounds.

Residential Amenity:

17. The proposals do not adversely impact the usability of the site's rear amenity space.

Highways:

18. Whilst WBC Highways have not been consulted on this application, the Highways Officer for the previous application (221978) concluded the current provision on site meets the Council's Parking Standards and therefore no objection is raised in this regard.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)
<i>In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.</i>

APPENDIX 1 - Conditions / informatives or Reasons for refusal

APPROVAL subject to the following conditions and informatives:

Conditions:

- 1. Approved details - This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered SK.2, 2291/01, 2291/02, 2291/03, 2291/04 & 2291/06 received by the local planning authority on 03/10/2022. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.
*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.***
- 2. External materials - The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall be of a similar appearance to those used in the existing building unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.
*Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.***

Informatives:

- 1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.**

APPENDIX 2 - Town/Parish Council comments

PLANNING REF : 222963
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Radstock House
: Radstock Lane, Earley, Wokingham
: RG6 5UL
SUBMITTED BY : Earley Town Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/11/2022

COMMENTS:

Recommend Refusal - due to the large dominant nature of the proposed rear dormer, prominent on this corner location, particularly when viewed from the rear, in Meadow Road, where the property would appear elevated, exaggerating its mass and dominance. Even if the roof to the side extension is reconstructed as originally approved under 202186, the edge of the dormer would sit on the verge of the higher roof and be visible when viewed from the front. The proposal is contrary to Policy CP3, being of an inappropriate scale, mass, built form, height and character, to the detriment of the general street scene. In addition the proposals are not sympathetic to the surrounding built environment or host dwelling and are inappropriate, contrary to Section 12 of the NPPF 2021,

ETC are also concerned that the hip roof over the recent side extension, as originally approved under 202186, does not appear to have been constructed as per the approved drawings in that rear slope of the roof is not in a continuous plane with that of the host dwelling and causes an incongruous step in the roof, as a result, ETC would request enforcement action to remedy this incorrectly constructed roof.