



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2025

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th December 2025

Appeal Ref: 6001060

15 Hopewell Drive, Gravesend, Kent DA12 4PX

- 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 Rajinder Singh Rai against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20250648.
 - The development proposed is dormer extension to rear roof slope in conjunction with formation of habitable rooms in roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on a) the character and appearance of the building and wider area; and b) the efficiency of the existing solar panels at No.13 Hopewell Drive.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is an existing two storey semi-detached dwelling. It is set back from the road and positioned within a well sized plot. This is broadly reflective of other houses in the area. The dwelling has been subject to some previous extensions. Some other properties in the vicinity have also been subject to extensions, including rear roof dormers. These works individually and collectively have not caused harm to the prevailing spacious residential character of the area.
4. The proposal is principally for a large rear roof dormer which would extend across much of the width and depth of the existing roof. Notwithstanding the use of matching materials, on its own the dormer would appear as a projection of the roof itself rather than as a more discrete extension that emerges from it.
5. The dwelling already has two, two-storey rear projections that extend out from the main roof. Thus, the proposal would not only have the appearance of overwhelming the existing roof but also of straddling these existing projections.
6. Consequently, the dormer would be an obtrusive and dominating addition that would give the resulting dwelling an appearance that was both top-heavy and out of proportion with the rest of the building. This would harm both the appearance of the property and be out of keeping with the more modest scale of buildings and extensions in the vicinity and which contribute to the overall character of the area.

7. The impact of the dormer on the character and appearance of the wider area would be modest due to its positioning. However, it would still be visible to neighbouring properties and from between houses on Astra Drive. As such, the level of wider visibility and impact is a further reason to reject the poor design.
8. The proposal includes rooflights to the front roof slope. The Council has not objected to this aspect of the scheme, and I see no reason to disagree.
9. Nonetheless, I find that the proposal, specifically the proposed rear dormer, would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the wider area. As such, there would be conflict with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (LPCS) which, amongst other things, requires development to be visually attractive and take into account a site's context and the local character. The proposal would also be contrary to the Supplementary Planning Document 'Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide' 2021 which requires roof extensions to complement the character of the existing property.

Efficiency of the existing solar panels at No.13

10. The Council has referred to the judgement in *McLennan, R (on the application of) v Medway Council & Anor* [2019] EWHC 1738 (Admin). This outlines that the contribution of domestic solar panels to the reduction in reliance on non-renewable energy is in the public interest and is therefore a material planning consideration.
11. The appeal proposal would be positioned almost immediately to the south of the roof of No.13, which contains solar panels on its rear slope. At my site visit I noted that even in December at around midday, the low winter sun caused a shadow from the existing two-storey rear extensions to fall across some of these panels.
12. Given the size and scale of the proposed dormer, it appears to me that the proposal could potentially have an effect upon the efficiency of the neighbour's solar panels. The appellant suggests that any effect would be negligible. However, without any evidence, such as a shadow movement study of the existing situation and proposed development, I cannot be certain of these claims and the scale of any effects, or otherwise, of the appeal proposal upon the efficiency of the solar panels.
13. Thus, the proposal would conflict with Policy CS18 of the LPCS insofar as it seeks to reduce the overall carbon footprint in the Borough. It would also conflict with paragraph 163 of the National Planning Policy Framework which, amongst other things, sets out that the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change should also be considered in assessing planning applications.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would cause harms which would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR