Planning appeal submitted on behalf of Mr C Bunce in response to the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council to refuse planning consent for alterations to roof to include raising of ridge height, provision of first floor accommodation and two storey rear extension at 15 Bridge Close, Bursledon, SO31 8AN.

LPA:	Eastleigh Borough Council
Application no:	F/17/19921
Refusal date:	16th March 2017

Executive summary

The following statement seeks to set out the case in support of the appeal seeking approval for an increase in the ridge height of detached bungalow at 15 Bridge Close, Bursledon.

Bridge Close comprises a cul-de-sac containing 23 detached bungalows. Whilst the site is clearly within the settlement boundary and the principle of development is acceptable there are no other policy designations for the site and it is not, for example located within a conservation area.

There are therefore no overriding reasons why consent should not be forthcoming on this particular site.

One of the main characteristics of Bridge Close is that it only contains detached bungalows. However, whilst they are of similar style they all appear to have differences in terms of siting and building lines, footprints, articulation, design and height. In their own way they are all slightly different, albeit they can be described as detached bungalows.

The proposals include an increase the ridge height of the bungalow by 0.9m, from 5m to 5.9m and an associated increase in the roof pitch from 33 degrees to 43 degrees.



Diagram 1 – the appeal site



Photograph 1 – the appeal site

Site and surrounding area

The appeal site is located within a cul-de-sac with no pedestrian access to other areas. The vast majority of users of Bridge Close would therefore be residents and their visitors.

The site is not located within a conservation area or subject to any other policy designation.

Bridge Close is an attractive street containing a number of detached red brick bungalows. Whilst the majority are traditional bungalows some of them are chalets – which living accommodation within their roofspace, with the implication that they have higher ridges.

Examples of chalet bungalows include no 8 and 17 Bridge Close.



Photograph 2 – 16 and 17 Bridge Close



Photograph 3 – no 8 Bridge Close

All the dwellings in Bridge Close are set back from the back edge of the highway and have generous front gardens of 9-10m.

Policy advice

The appeal site is identified in the Bursledon, Hamble-le-Rice and Hound Character Area Appraisal, adopted January 2008. This document comprises SPD and seeks to provide development control guidance to ensure new development is appropriate within the context of the character of the area.

Guidance in respect of Bridge Close is as follows:

- Maintain the predominant orientation of ridgelines
- Retain wide grass verges
- Maintain the importance of the central open greenspace and tree planting
- Maintain a uniformity in building heights within the street.

Proposed development

The proposals seek to utilise the roofspace as living accommodation thereby making the dwelling more efficient and better suited to a family lifestyle. The current ground floor comprises a kitchen, living room, dining room, bathroom and three bedrooms. If approved the dwelling will comprise a combined living room and kitchen, a bathroom and three bedrooms at ground floor and at first floor a bedroom (facing the rear garden) and a storage area.

The various components of the appeal proposals are as follows:

- In order to facilitate adequate headroom at first floor level the ridge height of the roof will be increased by 0.9m. The current ridge height of the existing building is in the order of 5m and it will thus be 5.9m if approval is given and the scheme implemented.

- In turn the roof pitch will be increased from 33 to 43 degrees. In common with all the neighbouring dwellings the roof is fully hipped facing the highway – a feature that will be retained.
- On the rear elevation a gable will be provided replacing the existing hipped roof.
- Two rooflights will be incorporated into the roof – one on each roofplane.

The following extracts from the submitted drawings seek to illustrate the extent of the proposed alterations.

The first set of extracts show the front elevation, firstly as existing and then as proposed. This is followed by a streetscene image seeking to show the proposals within the context of it immediate neighbours.

The first extract seeks to show what is, no doubt, the most important elevation – that of the front elevation, which is part of the public domain. The alterations here are in effect to increase the height of the ridge of the roof and alter its pitch.

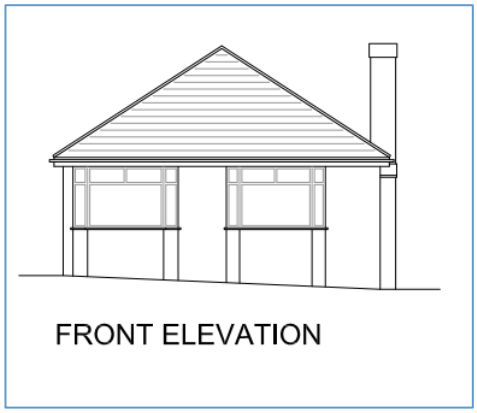

Diagram 2 – existing front elevation

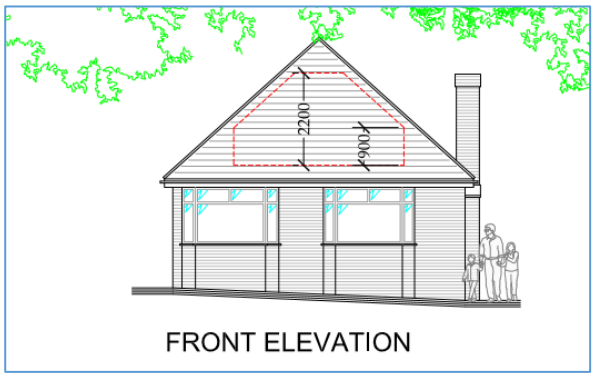

Diagram 3 – proposed front elevation

The following extract seeks to show the appeal property (in the centre of the extract) within the context of neighbouring properties. From the extract it is clear that all the properties are of different design and that no 17 in particular clearly has a higher ridge line than its neighbours – this in itself demonstrates that that there is a variety of heights and roof form within Bridge Close.



Diagram 4 – proposed streetscene

The next set of extracts seek to illustrate the side elevation – which shows the increase in height of the roof and ridge line, the provision of a roof light incorporated into the roof plane and the provision of a gable to the rear of the bungalow.

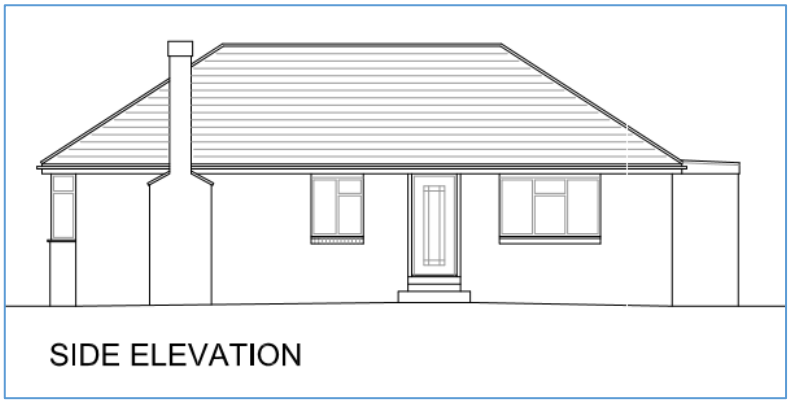

Diagram 5- existing side elevation

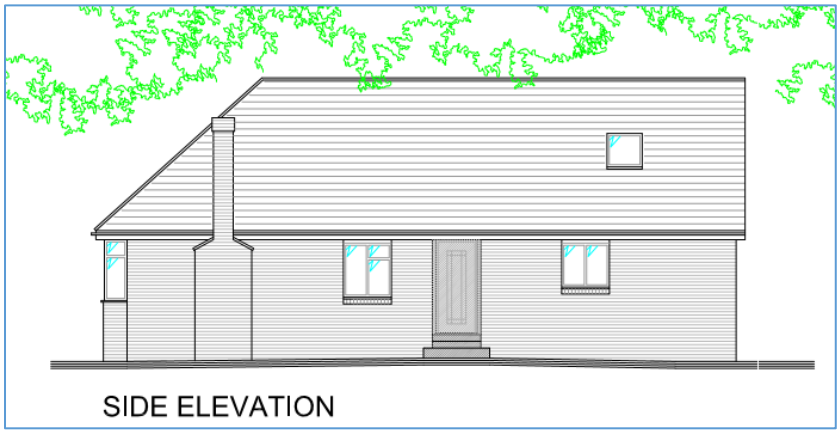

Diagram 6 – proposed side elevation

The final extracts show the rear elevation where the provision of a new gable roof is proposed.

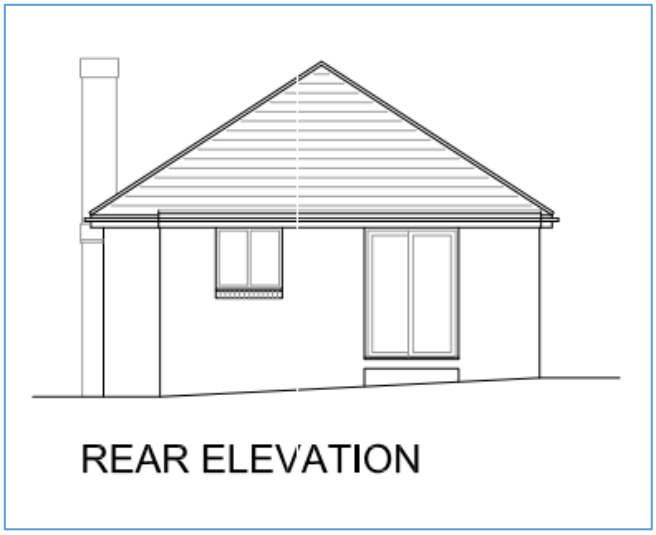

Diagram 7 – existing rear elevation

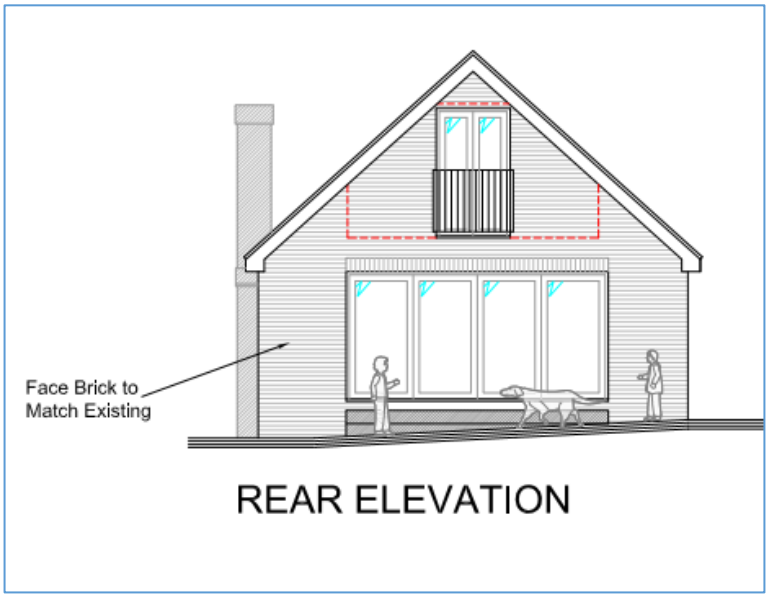

Diagram 8 – proposed rear elevation

Planning history

Four previous applications have been submitted on site that seek to raise and extend the roof of the appeal property so as to enable the use of the roof space for accommodation, as set out in the officer's delegated report.

These applications have been refused – but not taken to appeal – and have successively been reduced in scale so as seek to satisfy LPA concerns.

Reasons for refusal and statement of case

Planning application no F/17/79921, seeking consent for alterations to roof to include raising of ridge height, provision of first floor accommodation and two storey extension, was submitted on the 26th January 2017 and refused on the 16th March, 2017, for the following reason:

> *The proposed development, by reason of its design and increase in height would create an incongruous dwelling that would be at odds and detract from the uniformed character and appearance of the street scene and wider character of the area. As such the proposed development is contrary to Saved Policy 59.BE of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2001-2011, Policy DM1 of the Submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, BHH 21 of Character Area Appraisals Bursledon, Hamble-le Rice and Hound Supplementary Planning Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.*

It is clear from the officer's delegated report that the focus of the LPA is impact of the front elevation to the streetscene/public domain and the resultant adverse impact that the LPA contends that this will have on the character of the area, as per the following:

The proposed alteration to the roof of the dwelling, increasing the height of the roof above the neighbouring properties and this interrupting the unspoiled pattern of roof shapes and ridges descending along the close is considered to cause material harm to the streetscene and wider character of the area.

In response to this concern it is argued that almost every dwelling is different along Bridge Close and that to increase the ridge height of the appeal site by 0.9m will have no material impact on the character of the area.

Typical dwelling widths range from c6.5m to 10.5m and thus by definition this means that there is either a variety of ridge heights, or roof pitches, or both. The footprint of numerous, but by no means all of the, dwellings incorporate articulation in the form of forward projections resulting in hipped roofs incorporated into the main dwelling roof. This results in a variety of roof forms.

It is therefore incorrect for the officer's report to refer to the unspoiled pattern of roof shapes. The variety of building styles along Bridge Road demonstrate that there is no dominant form of development within the close.

It seems incongruous for the Bursledon, Hamble-le-Rice and Hound Character Area Appraisal to suggest that policy advice seeks a requirement to maintain a uniformity in building heights within the street.

To be clear whilst the bungalows in Bridge Close are similar, very few are the same. It appears that in certain instances two or three were built to the same design (though many of the dwellings have been altered over the years) but in many respects the dwellings are distinct.

This is illustrated by the following photograph that shows both the appeal site and no 14 Bridge Close, on the left hand side of the image – the appeal bungalow incorporates a pair of bay windows into the front elevation, whereas no 14 has a subsidiary element fronting the highway, with a single, central, bay window. In addition the subsidiary outshot has resulted in the provision of a lower ridge thereby resulting in a significantly different roof form. No 14 also appears to have a lower pitch to its roof as compared to the appeal property.

Thus whilst both dwellings can be described as detached red brick bungalows that use similar materials and have common chimneys there are significant differences between them – differences that are replicated throughout the close. Whilst the appeal proposals seek further alterations the finished form will still be a detached red brick bungalow with the same chimney and use common external materials.



Photograph 4 – nos. 14 and 15 Bridge Close

This, in itself, undermines the LPA contention that the Close consists of an unspoiled pattern of roof shapes and ridges.

The following two photographs seek to illustrate the view of the northern element of Bridge Close so as to illustrate the contention made by the LPA of the unspoiled pattern of roof shapes and ridges descending along the close.

Photograph 5 includes the appeal site (from left to right – 12 (part), 13, 14,15,16 (part) Bridge Close), whilst photograph 6 shows 7, 8, 9 and 10 (part). It is clear that in both photographs that there is no defining height, scale, design or roofscape that warrants policy advice that restricts variation in design to the extent requested as part of the appeal. The proposed changes will not create material or demonstrable harm to the character of the area or local amenities.



Photograph of 12-16 Bridge Close



Photograph 6 – view of 7-10 Bridge Close

Reference at this point is drawn to no 8 Bridge Close, as identified in the following extract:

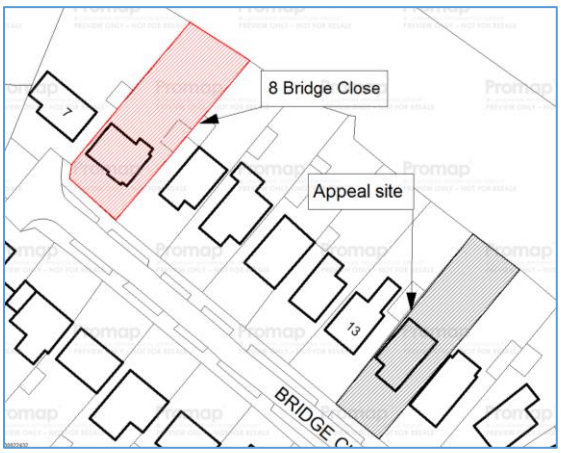

Diagram 9 - OS extract of Bridge Close – source pro-map

Consent was granted on the 31st October 2002 (consent no Z/39191/000/00) for the raising of the roof and the provision of a rear extension at 8 Bridge Close. Consent was granted by the LPA and was not the subject to an appeal. Consent was granted under delegated powers and the application was not considered by Members at committee. This implies that little or no public interest, in the form of objection letters, was shown in the scheme and thus was considered non-contentious.

8 Bridge Close is shown in the following illustration. It has a ridge height of 5.9m and is thus the same height as that proposed at the appeal site (refer to photographs 6 and 7).



Diagram 10 – approved plans for 8 Bridge Close

The LPA has therefore previously agreed that an increase in height of dwellings along Bridge Close is therefore acceptable in principle. It has also approved, under delegated powers, a scheme that results in a very similar form of development – in terms of ridge height – to that proposed in the current appeal. It therefore appears incongruous that the LPA has changed its mind in respect of its approach to applications of this nature.



Photograph 7 - 8 Bridge Close

However in granting consent for no 8 Bridge Close the LPA accepted that an increase in ridge heights is acceptable and this, in itself accentuates the variation in roofscape and scale within Bridge Close.

Overall it is clear that the variety of scale and design within Bridge Close do not warrant a restrictive approach to reasonable alterations to existing development. The development proposals are both reasonable and appropriate to the existing dwelling and context of the immediate area. They do not harm the character and amenities of the area and do not unduly upset the existing pattern of development with particular reference to roofscapes and ridges.

Whilst it is accepted that the proposals will result in an increase in the ridge height of the appeal dwelling the existing variety of local ridge heights both ensure that the appeal proposals are no higher than at least one other example on Bridge Close and that it is not incongruous with the immediate area.

Conclusions

It is therefore respectively requested that the Inspector approve the appeal under consideration.