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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 November 2024

**by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 5 December 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/D/24/3353314**

**Hacketts, High Street, Old Bursledon, SO31 8DL**

- 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 S Hoare against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
  - The application Ref is H/24/97673.
  - The development proposed is to remove existing roofs over dwelling and annexe and erect a second-floor extension and remodel the existing dwelling's exterior.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the Old Bursledon Conservation Area and upon the setting of nearby listed buildings.

### Reasons

3. Hacketts is a detached, two-storey dwelling dating from the 1970s with a pitched roof and 'L-shaped' footprint incorporating a single-storey limb. It sits back from its frontage to High Street on a spacious plot and in a historic village core within the Old Bursledon Conservation Area (CA) and Old Bursledon Special Policy Area, as defined within the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) adopted in 2022 (EBLP).
4. The CA is an extensive and diverse area centred around the village core which is identified within the Council's *Old Bursledon Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals Supplementary Planning Document* as Character Zone 7 – High Street. This part of the CA has the distinct feel of a charming rural village with a fairly dense pattern of development along High Street comprising a pleasing mix of principally brick and tiled traditional buildings, several grade II listed buildings recognised for their historic and architectural qualities, and tight walled enclosures to the back edges of the carriageway, all interwoven with a verdant array of mature boundary vegetation.
5. The appeal property is somewhat uncharacteristic of its immediate surroundings, being of much more recent construction than most of the nearby development and finished in a modern contemporary style with sharp lines, crisp white render, slate roof tiles and glass panel windows with dark frames. Nevertheless, because of its recessed position, and despite its slight elevation

due to the area's topography, it can only be glimpsed beyond its curtilage from a limited number of viewpoints. When looking west from the junction of High Street and Lands End Road it can be seen in the context of the grade II listed Dale and Woodbine Cottages which are set in the immediate foreground. However, it is only ever viewed from the public domain at distance and observed in the background as an incidental part of a much wider context, where its current form appears comfortable in its fairly secluded setting with an innocuous presence.

6. The proposal would substantially remodel the dwelling's appearance with the existing pitched roofs removed to create a contemporary flat-roofed design throughout, and new living space added at second floor level within an 'L-shaped' flat roof extension over part of the building's footprint. The external surfaces would comprise a mix of render, as existing, and blue/grey cladding, including at second floor with a range of floor-to-ceiling glass panel windows at this level with frames to match the existing.
7. Part of the Council's concern rests with the flat roof form of the proposal, which they consider would be unsympathetic and out of keeping with the traditional pitched roofs that locally prevail. Nevertheless, contemporary flat roof design is not alien within the wider CA, as exemplified by the appellant. I appreciate that the context of each site is key, but I take from the developments at Waters Edge, Lands End Road and Kebun, School Road, that such an architectural approach can, in principle, be sympathetic to the local historic environment. Given the contextual setting of Hacketts within the CA, I am not persuaded that the existing building is overly sensitive to such a further contemporary overhaul.
8. However, EBLP Policy BU7 deals specifically with residential extensions and replacement dwellings within the Special Policy Area. Amongst other things it requires residential extensions to be subservient and in proportion to the existing building in form, scale and design.
9. I have carefully considered the proposal in relation to the existing dwelling. Drg No PG.8175.23.02 Rev A shows the existing elevations and roof plan. These illustrate the roof's eaves to be set well above the top of the existing first-floor window openings. However, from the photographs provided within the application's supporting *Planning Policy Statement (v4)*, and as confirmed by my own observations on site, it is clear that the eaves sit just above the top of the window openings, with little space between both. As a consequence, despite its two-storey height, the building has a reasonably low profile with a strong horizontal emphasis. This is important to the building's successful assimilation into its surrounding context, particularly in light of its slightly elevated position.
10. When studying the proposed elevations, as shown on Drg No PG.8175.23.05 Rev G and the 3D computer generated image produced for the material schedule, it is clear that there would be a noticeable uplift to the height of the existing first-floor façades resulting in greater solid to void ratios for the building at this level. When this factor is combined with the vertically faced roof addition, the strong vertical emphasis of the three-storey bays that would be created to the front and rear elevations, and the 'block-like' form of the building overall, my impression is that its remodelled appearance would be perceived to have considerably more bulk and mass than the existing. I

appreciate that by removing the pitched roofs, the single-storey element would become a far less prominent part of the building but this would not mitigate the shift towards a taller building in part, and one with far greater vertical proportions and a more imposing visual presence. The scale and impact of the new second floor accommodation would be exaggerated further by the excess amount of glazing, which would draw the eye, especially after dark when the indoor space may be internally lit. There is no suggestion that the proposal would unacceptably enlarge the size of the dwelling in relation to volume but by failing to be subservient and in proportion to the existing building in terms of form and scale, the proposal would directly conflict with Policy BU7. For the same reasons there would be conflict with Part 1a of EBLP Policy DM26, which deals in part with residential extensions to dwellings in the countryside.

11. The creation of a more imposing building would erode the dwelling's inconspicuous presence from certain vantage points, particularly when seen from the site's entrance along High Street, and in the vista shared with Dale and Woodbine Cottages. In this regard, I share the Council's view that the proposal would have an urbanising effect that would erode the village core's rural charm. This would be harmful to the character and appearance of the CA and to the setting of nearby listed buildings.
12. Having regard to paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm arising from the proposal to the significance of the conservation area and the adjacent cottages as heritage assets would be less than substantial. However, this does not equate to a less than substantial objection and any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification in line with paragraph 206. Furthermore, in line with the Framework's paragraph 208, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
13. Given the statutory duties set out in Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, I attach significant weight to the harm that I have identified to the historic environment.
14. The appellant has pointed to the benefits of the development in terms of jobs and financial investment to local construction firms. This carries some weight as a public benefit. Based on my findings, I do not agree that there would be any visual improvement to the existing building. Neither is there any evidence to suggest that the appeal proposal represents the only means of repairing the existing roof or improving the building's sustainability credentials. The harm to the character and appearance of the CA and the setting of two nearby grade II listed buildings is neither justified nor outweighed by the limited degree of public benefit identified.

## Conclusions

15. For the reasons given, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the Old Bursledon Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings. As such, in addition to the conflict with Policies BU7 and DM26, there would be further conflict with EBLP Policies S8, DM1 and DM12 as far as they seek to ensure that all development has an acceptable impact upon the character and appearance of an area and which sustains and enhances the

special character and qualities of heritage assets, including the setting of listed buildings. For the same reasons there would be conflict with the Framework's objectives for conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

*John D Allan*

INSPECTOR