
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 October 2016

by A A Phillips BA(Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 1 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/P4225/D/16/3158506

11 Stonie Heyes Avenue, Rochdale

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mohammad Ilyas against the decision of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00373/HOUS, dated 1 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with front dormer extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion with front dormer extension at 11 Stonie Heyes Avenue, Rochdale in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/00373/HOUS, dated 1 April 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used on the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Plan 1:200 and Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations Reference 1331.16 dated January 2016.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene, generally.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey pitched roof end of terrace house situated within the Defined Urban Area of Rochdale. It is in a relatively prominent corner location facing outwards towards the street and Buckley Hall Industrial Estate beyond.
 4. Residential properties in the vicinity have an unusual relationship to one another and are mainly formed as rows of terraces around cul-de-sacs. This results in difficulty in identifying the fronts and rears of properties in some
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- cases. I observed on site that the appeal property appears to have previously benefited from a front gable extension which differentiates it from other properties in the row.
5. The proposal is for a front flat roof dormer extension with a ridge to match the existing property. The base of the dormer would be at the same level as the ridge of the projecting front gable extension. It would be clad in tiles to match the existing roof material.
 6. Policies H/11, G/BE/1 and BE/2 of the Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan 2001-2016 Adopted June 2006 (the UDP) require residential development and extensions to satisfy a range of criteria if they are to be acceptable. These include compatibility in terms of scale, height, materials and style in order to contribute towards an attractive built environment.
 7. Furthermore, the Council's Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development Unitary Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note February 1995 (SPG) provide additional guidance with particular reference to dormers. The SPG advises that wherever possible dormer extensions should be installed on the rear elevation of properties. Where on the front of a property, a dormer should incorporate the existing roofing materials, be set back from the main front wall of the dwelling, have windows that reflect the proportions on the existing dwelling and should be set below the ridge and in from the side of the property.
 8. It is clear to me that front dormers are not encouraged. However, I find no evidence to suggest that they are not unacceptable. Indeed, at my site visit I observed several front dormers in area on similar properties to 11 Stonie Heyes Avenue (No 11), including some in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site. From the evidence before me is also clear that the large front dormer extension at No 15 was approved by the Council in May 2014 under the same planning policy regime that now exists. Other front and rear dormers are very prominent in the street scene in the area, including several on Ditton Mead Close and others which are clearly visible from the local public realm and highway network.
 9. The proposal would cover a substantial part of the front roof plane and would be level with the ridge of the existing property. However, it would incorporate matching facing roof tiles, be set back from the main front of the property and the proposed arrangement of windows appears satisfactory in relation to other openings on the main front elevation.
 10. Although the property has previously been extended to the front I do not consider that the cumulative effect of the proposal would be particularly harmful to the overall character and appearance of the property.
 11. Furthermore, although it occupies a prominent location within the street scene, it is no more prominent than other nearby houses which have large front dormers which face outwards towards the nearby public realm and Stonie Heyes Avenue. I also recognise that poorly designed and sited developments should not be a means of justifying approving similar proposals elsewhere. Nonetheless, the overall character and appearance of the area has been compromised by other similar developments. I do not consider that the current proposal would harmfully erode the quality of the townscape, be incompatible

with its surroundings or adversely affect the character of the street scene to an unacceptable degree.

12. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would not have an unacceptable harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene, generally. As such it is compatible with design requirements of Policies H/11, G/BE/1 and BE/2 of the UDP, the SPG and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions

13. I have specified the approved plans for certainty. I also attach a condition requiring the external surfaces to match those used on the existing building.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons and taking account of other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Alastair Phillips

INSPECTOR