The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2016

by Gareth W Thomas BSc(Hons) MSc(Dist) PGDip MRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/16/3157536
88 Watling Street, St Albans AL1 2QG

- 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 & Mrs E Carolan against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
- The application Ref 5/16/1189, dated 18 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 June 2016.
- The development proposed is for the insertion of dormer and front and rear roof lights.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the insertion of dormer and front and rear roof lights at 88 Watling Street, St Albans AL1 2QG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/16/1189, dated 18 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2014-08-03YK AP-01 Rev A and 2014-08-03YK EX-01 Rev B.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed dormer on the character and appearance of the host property and area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property comprises of a large detached house set within a small private gated development of five identical properties built off a spur off Watling Street and within a largely residential area. The property occupies a relatively substantial plot and incorporates a large half-hipped main roof structure. The proposal would see the introduction of a centrally placed flat roofed dormer to the rear roof slope measuring some 3.75m wide and 2.2m high. It would sit well below the ridgeline. In addition, small roof lights would be installed, two on the front roofslope and one either side of the dormer.

4. I note that the St Albans District Local Plan Policies 69 and 72 seek to promote high quality design for new developments and in terms of extensions to properties set out to ensure that schemes conform to a series of principles including in terms of scale and character together with achieving compatibility

with the original form of the host building. In terms of the appeal proposal, the dormer would be set well below the ridge of the principal roof and in an appropriate distance from the sides in a central position within the roof slope in order not to appear an over dominant feature at the rear of the property, either in relation to the roof or the horizontal width of the property. The proposed form and scale of the dormer, and its design and materials would also be in keeping with the property. Furthermore, the dormer would not be visible from public vantage points or to the front of the property and there would be no harm to the street scene.

5. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not detract from the character and appearance of the host property or of the local area. There would be no conflict with Policies 69 and 72 of the District Local Plan. In turn, there would be similarly no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') which also seeks high quality design which respects local context.

6. My attention has been drawn to other roof dormers within the immediate neighbourhood which the appellant considers are similar in form to the one before me, but my decision has been based on the planning merits of this particular proposal.

Other considerations

7. I have taken account of the objection raised by a neighbouring occupier in relation to the harm to their living conditions. I accept that there is mutual overlooking between properties in many suburban locations. However, given the distances involved I am not persuaded that there would be any material increase in overlooking resulting in loss of privacy. I am therefore satisfied that there would be no unacceptable levels of harm caused to the living conditions of neighbouring properties, and the Council also raised no issue in this regard.

Conditions

8. No conditions have been suggested by the Council. However I have considered the advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance and the Framework concerning the use of conditions. A condition is imposed setting out time limits for commencement and specifying approved plans in the interests of providing certainty.

Conclusion

9. Having regard to the above reasons and to all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

Gareth W Thomas

INSPECTOR