

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 27 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/17/3169785
117 Stanley Road, Hornchurch RM12 4JP

- 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 Ian Bloys against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1585.16, dated 23 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion and roof alteration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect the development would have on the character and appearance of the area and on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a modest bungalow with a hipped roof and is fronted by a pair of projecting bay windows with gabled roofs. Its dimensions and appearance are similar to that of other bungalows in the vicinity on both sides of Stanley Road. This consistency contributes to a positive character and appearance in the streetscape within which the appeal site sits.
 4. The proposal would change the existing almost pyramidal roof to one with an elongated ridge and half gables surmounted by small hips. A box dormer would be added to the rear and two pitched roof dormers with gables to the front. These front dormers would be aligned with the ground floor bays. However, their lowest parts would extend below the ridge of those existing bay window roofs.
 5. The front dormers would appear wide within the confines of the proposed front roof slope and their roofs would be positioned very close to the main roof's ridge and hips. The result would be dormers which appear out of proportion within the roof slope and which would not appear subordinate in the overall composition of the front of the property. The proposal would be incongruous in relation to the host building and the wider streetscape of similar bungalows
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with predominantly unaltered front roofs. This would consequently harm the area's character and appearance.

6. As such the proposal would be contrary to Core Strategy¹ Policy 61 which requires development to maintain, enhance or improve the character and appearance of the local area. This is supported by planning guidance² which advises that dormers should be contained well within the body of the roof and located well below the roofline. Although the appellant considers this guidance only applies to houses as shown in the illustrative sketches, its Glossary includes bungalows in its definition of dwellings and the advice within it cannot reasonably be read as only applying to two storey typologies.
7. The appellant considers that some elements of the proposal may constitute permitted development. However, even if the appellant is correct in his interpretation of the permitted development position, there is no suggestion that this would include the front dormers. I have therefore afforded this very little weight in reaching my decision.

Neighbours' living conditions

8. The proposal would add a modest half gable area to each of its flank elevations, including that which is situated close to its neighbour at 115 Stanley Road. The flanks of the front and rear dormers would be set back from the sides of the appeal property. This neighbouring property has two windows facing the appeal building, including one which the appellant advises serves a bedroom. Although the height of the flank wall opposite these windows would be raised, the pitch of the roof slopes to front and rear would be very similar to the existing arrangement.
9. Whilst some loss of daylight may result from this arrangement this is likely to be very limited compared to the existing configuration. The altered roof and flank elevation would not have an intrusive or enclosing effect on neighbouring occupiers. Coupled with the fact that other habitable rooms within No 115 would be unaffected, such a limited effect would not materially harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers
10. The Council's planning guidance assesses the acceptability of side extensions in terms of effects on light by applying a '45° rule'³. The Council's officer report considers the proposal would fail this test. Notwithstanding that the guidance does not appear to apply this manner of assessment to roof alterations, the officer report considers that this supports their streetscape conclusions as opposed to it justifying their concerns about living conditions. In any event, I have found that no unacceptable overshadowing or loss of sunlight and daylight would result and the proposal would therefore comply with Core Strategy Policy 61 in this respect.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of bungalows on surrounding streets which have front dormer extensions and I was able to view these when I visited the area. None of these are identical to the appeal proposal, particularly in respect of their relationship to the roof slopes in which

¹ Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, 2008.

² Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document, 2011.

³ Paragraph 6.8.

they are situated and to surrounding properties. Furthermore, I saw that these are very much in the minority and I do not know the circumstances of those cases or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration. In any event I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits and they do not lead me to an alternative conclusion.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area contrary to the development plan as supported by supplementary guidance. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR