
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 March 2017

by Nick Fagan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/D/17/3169228

3 Testlands Avenue, Nursling, Southampton, Hampshire SO16 0XG

- 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 Mark Rawlings against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02363/FULLS, dated 29 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is a ground floor front extension with new first floor roof conversion to habitable space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Testlands Avenue contains residential bungalows of generally modest proportions and uniform design comprising pitched and hipped roofs with forward projections onto the street.
 4. The proposal is to convert the loft space of the bungalow at No 3 into two bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms, which involves raising the roof by 525mm and constructing two large rear dormers and a smaller front dormer. It also includes extending the front of the dwelling at ground floor to the front building line of the existing forward projection.
 5. Most of the bungalows on Testlands Avenue have not been altered and remain in their original form and this lends the street a simple suburban character, which is emphasised by the uniform dwarf walls to the bungalows and the wide grass verges on both sides of the street. This character is also apparent in the way that the roofs of the bungalows step down the hill, particularly when viewed from the southern end of the Avenue.
 6. The proposal, because it would increase the height of the property's roof to that of its neighbour at No 5, would eradicate the step in the bungalows' roofs at this location. Such a change would be very noticeable in the street scene at this point looking north up the street and would break the uniformity of the
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bungalows' stepped roofscape, which is an important feature of the street's character and appearance.

7. The appellants draw my attention to what they consider to be a similar roof extension at No 7. However, I note that No 7's roof is still noticeably lower than that of its neighbour at No 9 and that loft conversion does not therefore break the uniformity in the street's stepped roofscape. There have, as the appellant states, been other similar roof extensions in the past. I observed that this was the case at Nos 21 and 23 but these examples are located near the top of the road where the hill starts to level out and so do not have the same effect in terms of roofscape that this proposal would have on the street scene. In any case these examples may have been constructed under a different policy framework or may even have been permitted development.
8. The rear dormer windows would be large but they would be proportionate to the rear roof and have pitched and hipped roofs to match the angles of the main roof. The front dormer and rooflights would be of acceptable modest proportions. Nonetheless, the increase in the height of the bungalow's roof would be unacceptable for the reason indicated above.
9. I am also concerned about the front extension. The forward hipped roof projections of the original bungalows remain a dominant part of the street scape and are an inherent design feature of these modest sized bungalows. It appears that there may have been front extensions to a few of the other bungalows, such as Nos 11 and 13. But those extensions are set back behind the front building line whereas the front extension in this case would be in line with No 3's front building line. As such it would take away a key feature of the bungalow's design and its appearance would then be at odds with that of neighbouring bungalows.
10. For these reasons I conclude that the proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. Policy E1 of the Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2016 states, amongst other things, that development should integrate, respect and complement the character of the area in which it is located in terms of layout, appearance, scale, materials and building styles. The proposed development would not do so for the above reasons and consequently fails to comply with this development plan policy, and also with the relevant design principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Fagan

INSPECTOR