
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2017

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DiP TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/17/3169205

61 Kingston Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6UB

- 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 Irfan Khan against the decision of Wycombe District Council.
 - The application ref: 16/08155/FUL, dated 9 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a dormer in the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a dormer in the front elevation at 61 Kingston Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6UB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/08155/FUL, dated 9 November 2016.

Procedural Matter

2. Whilst on the application form the development was described as started but not completed, I observed on my visit that it appeared broadly finished. I have therefore determined this appeal on the basis of the retention of the existing dormer, which is largely as shown on drawing no. 1742/1/5837, albeit it has three separate window panes rather than the single pane depicted.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

4. This part of Kingston Road is loosely characterised by semi-detached properties, finished in a mix of masonry and paint, which have a predominantly hipped roof form. Some have front extensions and porches of differing appearance, and although I did not observe any front-facing dormer windows, there are some to the rear and sides. Owing to the topography, some of the pairs have a stepped roof form, where the eaves and ridge on one dwelling are higher than those on its attached neighbour. Nos. 59 and 61 are one such pair. No. 61 additionally has a hip to gable extension and a rear dormer. Given those general characteristics, this is not an area with a strong sense of local distinctiveness.

5. The dormer the subject of this appeal is slightly off-set from the centre of the roof, but is located above its eaves, below its ridge, and in from its sides. The three window panes give it less of a horizontal emphasis than suggested by the drawing, and their verticality is consistent with the fenestration on the floors below. Those characteristics, and the use of hanging tiles which broadly match the colour of the roof, ensures that the dormer is reasonably sympathetic to the host property.
6. Although the appellant has provided examples of front-facing dormers on surrounding roads, there are few if any in Kingston Road, and such features are not a typical of the area. Nevertheless, given this dormer's design and no. 61's other roof alterations, and this pair's stepped roof form and location at the end of a row, the development does not stand out as a discordant feature amidst very similar properties. Furthermore, although the dormer can be clearly seen when approaching along Kingston Road from the south, in some of those views it is seen against the backdrop of dwellings on higher ground beyond.
7. Consequently, the development does not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property, the streetscene, or the wider surroundings. Whilst the Council is concerned with the precedent allowing this development could set, I have considered it on its merits, and on this building, in this location, I have concluded that the dormer would not cause significant harm.
8. Policies H17 and G3 of the Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 (2007) ('LP'), and policy CS 19 of the Wycombe Core Strategy 2008 ('WCS') set out, amongst other things and in general terms, that development shall: be to a high design standard which respects, and is sympathetic to, its context by reference to matters such as scale, bulk and form; maintain or reinforce local distinctiveness; and not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the original property or the area. For the reasons above the scheme would not conflict with those policies.
9. Although Appendix 4 of the LP states that dormers shall be 'small', that is not defined. In any event, I have found that the development is not significantly obtrusive in the streetscene, and is reasonably visually integrated, and in harmony, with its host. Whilst the Council's decision also refers to LP policy G8, as that is concerned with protecting living conditions, it is of little relevance to the reason for refusal. The appeal will therefore be allowed.
10. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions against the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework. However, as the development is already in place, the standard time limit for commencement condition is unnecessary, as is the suggested condition requiring that the dormer be faced with matching materials. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR