

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 August 2017

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 07 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/17/3175989

202 Mountdale Gardens, LEIGH-on-SEA, Essex, SS9 4AA

- 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 Mrs Amy Woodham against the decision of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 17/00317/FULH, dated 17 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 12 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is extension to existing front dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property, the semi-detached pair of which it forms part, and the wider area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property sits within a housing area that appears cohesive as a result of repeated house styles and designs. A notable feature of all of the dwellings along this stretch of road is the inclusion of flat roofed dormer windows. Whether on the side or front elevation of a dwelling, the dormer windows are positioned with generous spacing to the roof eaves and ridge.
 4. The appeal property is semi-detached, and a single flat roofed dormer window is centrally positioned across the two buildings. Although this results in quite a wide dormer window, it does not appear dominant on the properties due to the expanse of undeveloped roof which surrounds it.
 5. Whilst I acknowledge that the proposal would alter the symmetry of the semi-detached pair of dwellings of which it forms part, I find no issue in principle to the extension of the existing dormer window. However, the proposed width of the addition would result in an overly dominant and discordant feature on the property and the pair, and the proximity to the ridge of the hipped roof would create a particularly cramped and awkward detail. The proposal would not appear incidental in the roof slope or be sufficiently set in from the side wall, as advised in paragraph 366 of the Council's adopted Design and Townscape Guide
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(SPD1)¹. This guidance reinforces Policy DM1 of the Development Management Document 2015 (DMD), which seeks good quality design that adds to the quality of the area and respects the character of the site, its local context and surroundings in matters including size, scale, proportions and detailed design.

6. The appellant has drawn attention to an extended dormer window on the same style of semi-detached property within the same housing group. Whilst this forms part of the street scene, it is not characteristic of the scale of dormer windows found in this area. Neither the appellant nor the Council has identified a specific planning permission for this addition, and as such it is unclear whether or not that development was assessed against the current planning policy framework. On the basis of the evidence in this appeal, as that scale of dormer window is the exception in the street scene it does not justify acceptance of the appeal proposal.
7. The appellant advises that the proposal would be less onerous than the example nearby, but I do not consider the differences to be material, and the proposal would nonetheless appear overly large and dominant on the roofslope. I acknowledge that the appeal property is set back from the roadway, but it would be clearly visible in the street scene. The absence of other dwellings directly opposite the site does not mitigate the impact on the setting.
8. The need for the extension to an existing bedroom is set out in the appellant's statement, and whilst I have given some weight to this factor it would not warrant a development of the scale and visual impact proposed. I appreciate that the proposal did not elicit any objection from local residents, but this is not the only factor to be considered.
9. I therefore conclude that as a result of its design, width and resultant size, the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, the semi-detached pair of which it forms part, and the wider area. It would conflict with the design aims of DMD Policies DM1 and DM3, which requires additions to adopt a scale that is respectful and subservient to that of the original building and surrounding area; with SPD1, and Policies CP4 and KP2 of the Southend on Sea Core Strategy 2007, which seek amongst other criteria to maintain and enhance the appeal and character of residential areas, and to respect the character and scale of the existing neighbourhood.

Conclusion

10. The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and part of its environmental strand is to contribute to protecting and enhancing the built environment. A core planning principle of the Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design, but for the reasons given above the proposal would not comply with this principle and would not be sustainable development supported through the Framework. As a consequence, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR

¹ Supplementary Planning Document 1, Design and Townscape Guide 2009