The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 September 2017

by K Ford BSocSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 3rd October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F0114/D/17/3178990
142 The Hollow, Southdown, Bath BA2 1NF

- 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 Jonathan Dancey against the decision of Bath & North East Somerset Council.
- The application Ref 17/00675/FUL, dated 11 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2017.
- The development proposed is described as 'install a dormer window to the rear of the property allowing for the creation of a fourth bedroom'.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a 2 storey semi-detached house with hipped roof in a primarily residential area. Part of a row of similarly styled properties, the house sits in an elevated position above street level in a road that slopes upwards to Whiteway Road. The dwelling is located in front of a block of flats, accessed off Haycombe Drive which runs behind the property. There is general uniformity in the style and design of the properties in the row of houses within which No 142 sits although there is some variation in the wider area. A number of properties have been altered with extensions and dormer windows. The proposal is to add a dormer window to the rear of the No 142 to create a fourth bedroom.

4. The proposed dormer would extend across the majority of the roof and rise almost directly from the rear wall to terminate in a flat roof just below the ridge. It would also encroach onto the hipped roof to the side of the dwelling. The dormer would significantly increase the bulk of the roof, rendering it out of scale and proportion to the existing dwelling. As a result, the proposal would be incompatible with the character and appearance of the host property. The incongruity would be compounded by the fact that the dwelling is part of a pair of semi-detached houses and the proposal would severely compromise the symmetry of the rear elevation. Although the proposed materials would tie in with the existing roof, this would not offset the harm I have described.

5. The size and siting of the dormer mean that it would be visible from public viewpoints to the front, side and rear of the property. It would be detrimental to the street scene, particularly when viewed from Haycombe Drive to the south and west of the dwelling which is a road that provides access to a wider area and so can expect to get some level of footfall. The rear boundary of No 142 and rear and side boundary of No 144 is marked by fencing and vegetation. This would not however screen the proposal completely or mitigate harm to views of the property that would be caused by the proposal. Whilst the elevated siting of the property means that the dormer would only be partially visible when viewed standing in front of the property, it would not go unnoticed and would be visible when walking up The Hollow.

6. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the wider area. It would therefore conflict with saved Policies D.2 and D.4 of the Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan (including minerals and waste policies) 2007, and Policy CP6 of the Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy 2014. Between them, these policies require new development to employ high quality design, maintain or enhance the character of the public realm, respond to local context and reinforce or complement attractive qualities of local distinctiveness.

Other Matters

7. Attention has been drawn to other dormers in the area, including No 186 The Hollow which I viewed as part of my visit. Not all dormers in the area have necessarily maintained the character or appearance of the area and therefore cannot be treated as a persuasive precedent for allowing the appeal. I do not have full details of these other cases or the reasons for their approval to enable me to draw a comprehensive comparison with the case before me. Furthermore, each case is determined on its own merits, and irrespective of the approach taken by the Council in determining these applications, if indeed permission was required, I have reached my conclusion on the appeal based on the information available.

8. I acknowledge the family benefits that would arise from the efficient use of land by the creation of additional bedroom space as well as the need to comply with Building Regulations. These factors are, however outweighed by the harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

9. For the above reasons, and notwithstanding the absence of local objections, the appeal is dismissed.

K Ford

INSPECTOR