



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2017

by Mr Kim Bennett DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V1505/D/17/3181814

6 Lilac Avenue, Wickford SS12 0BW

- 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 Lewis against the decision of Basildon Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00679/FULL, dated 17 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 31 July 2017.
 - The development proposed is a hip to gable loft conversion with front and rear dormers.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. At the time of my site visit building works were well advanced. At the rear the dormer was partially constructed along with a single storey flat roof extension. The latter is not shown on the plans before me. At the front, the two dormers had been partially constructed, but without the linked flat roofed element shown on the plans. For the avoidance of doubt I have made my decision based on the plans before me.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property comprises a semi-detached bungalow located on the eastern side Lilac Avenue. There are bungalows to both sides of the road and I observed that a number had front dormer extensions of varying designs and proportions.
5. The appellant argues that the proposed development would respect the existing scale of the building by maintaining similar massing and proportions, and that by using matching materials it would create a sympathetic form and provide cohesion with the existing property.
6. The majority of properties along both sides of the southern part of the road are semi-detached bungalows with hipped roofs. I also noted that there are two main types of design; one with each pair having a front gable projection at each end, and the other, which includes the appeal property, without the front projection, which gives a more modest proportion. In that respect, the appeal

property is the central pair of three such designs. It is prominent in the street scene from both directions. In my view, a combination of the change of the hip to the gable roof, together with two large front dormers which would occupy the greater part of the roof, and the fact that both would be linked together by an element of flat roof, would be over dominant and incongruous, detracting from the simple proportions of the existing unaltered hipped roofs. Indeed on this side of the road there are no other front dormers until No 28 Lilac Avenue, and that is a single dormer albeit large. Furthermore, given that the adjoining bungalow No 8 Lilac Avenue is unaltered, the extent of such development would also seriously unbalance the roofscape visually of the pair of bungalows. The combined impacts of the proposed development would therefore cause visual harm.

7. I acknowledge that there are other examples of front dormers along the road, including the pair of double dormers directly opposite at Nos 9 & 11. I am not aware of the details of these or when they were permitted, but in my view they illustrate the harm that is caused by such large structures on the front elevation of the relatively modest roofs of which they form part, and are not a good reason to perpetuate such harm elsewhere. Such an approach would gradually lead to further erosion of the character of the area if repeated regularly. Similarly, whilst there are also examples of isolated single dormers which are over large in my view, they have not generally altered the hip roof character apart from isolated cases. Additionally there are also examples of dormers of more modest proportions which do not dominate the roofscape. I am not persuaded therefore that the relatively few unfortunate alterations that exist have harmed the overall character of the road such that they should form the benchmark to be repeated elsewhere.
8. The Council raises no objections to the rear dormer which is generally concealed from public views and having inspected that element at my site visit, I see no reason to reach a different conclusion.
9. Notwithstanding that, the front dormers and alterations to the main roof as proposed on the submitted plans would cause visual harm for the reasons given. The development would therefore be contrary to Saved Policy BAS BE12 of the Council's Local Plan and also the adopted Development Control Guidelines, in that it would harm the character of the host dwelling and the wider street scene.
10. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR