



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2019

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1775/D/19/3232801

25 Battenburg Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 0SJ

- 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 and Mrs Stokes against the decision of Portsmouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00265/HOU, dated 18 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is removal of flat roof to front dormer and pitch new concrete tile roof to match existing. Strip cement board cladding and re-cover with tile hanging to match existing.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. The Council has used a different description, which accords with the description provided by the appellant on the appeal form and is construction of dormer window to front roof slope; installation of tile hanging to roof.
3. On my site inspection I observed that a flat roofed dormer window has been constructed on the front elevation which has grey cladded walls. There is also a flat-roofed dormer on the rear roof slope, and the hipped flank wall of the property has been replaced by a gable. The planning application officer report states that the appellant proposes to amend the existing front dormer, which has previously been the subject of two refused retrospective planning applications, to give it a pitched roof and reduce its width by 0.4m.
4. The planning application drawing 1103.17 rev C includes details of a side roof extension and rear dormer window, which appears to accord with the works that have taken place on site, and are not for determination under the current appeal. Accordingly, for the avoidance of doubt, I describe the development as construction of dormer window to front roof slope and base my decision upon the front dormer details shown on planning application drawing 1103.17 rev C and the proposed materials detailed on the planning application form, which are tile hanging walls and concrete tiled roof.
5. The site has been the subject of a dismissed appeal decision on 11 June 2018, Ref APP/ Z1775/D/18/3200231, with respect to the construction of a front

dormer and the installation of cladding to the rear dormer. This is a material consideration to which I afford significant weight. It is noted that the design of the appeal dormer differs from that of the dismissed scheme. This matter has been taken full account of in the reasoning set out below.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dormer on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider surrounding area.

Reasons

7. The appeal property comprises a two storey, semi-detached house located on the corner of Battenburg Avenue and Kearsney Avenue, within an established residential area. The vicinity of the appeal site is characterised by semi-detached and terraced houses with hipped and pitched roofs, whose street-facing roof slopes, in the main, are unaltered. The roofscape appears uncluttered, and brick chimneys with pots are characteristic attractive roof features.
8. The appeal property is visually prominent when viewed from the public realm due to its corner position and the aforementioned side and rear roof extensions, which have added significant bulk and mass to the building, resulting in a top-heavy roof which is out of symmetry with the adjoining semi-detached house.
9. The current proposal introduces some positive design changes to the previously dismissed appeal scheme, including tile hanging walls, a reduction in dormer width and a pitched roof. However, notwithstanding these alterations, the proposed dormer would occupy a considerable amount of the roof slope. It would appear visually dominant due to its width, depth, height and position, with its ridge height aligning with that of the main roof ridge.
10. The pitched roof design, being bulkier than the roof of the bay windows below, serves to draw attention to the window, exacerbating its incongruous, top-heavy appearance, and it would not appear subservient in relation to the ground and first floor bay windows below. The dormer would be sited adjacent to, and would visually overwhelm, the existing multi-potted chimney feature of the building. This would be at odds with the simple uncluttered roof form which is characteristic of the immediate locality. The result would be a visually dominant and discordant addition to the roof, in its own right, as well as in combination with the other roof extensions to the dwelling. Accordingly, the proposal would materially harm the character and appearance of the host property, and the area when viewed from within the context of Battenburg Avenue and Kearsney Avenue.
11. The appellant has drawn my attention to other existing front dormers in the area at Nos. 37 and 86 Battenburg Avenue, the former of which was brought to the attention of the previous appeal inspector. I do not know the full circumstances of these cases. Based on my site inspection, I concur with the previous Inspector that the visual prominence of No.37, due to building positioning and building lines, is less pronounced within the street-scene than the corner appeal site property and that the dormer at No.37 is set below the ridge height.

12. I observed that the front dormer at No.86 is positioned centrally in relation to the width of the front roof slope, so that there is a distinct gap between the dormer and the chimney and the dormer appears subservient in relation to the ground and first floor fenestration. The dormer also matches the main building in terms of its roof, walls and window frame detailing, thereby blending in with the largely consistent brown materials which characterise the front and side of the building.
13. Notwithstanding the above, I am not persuaded that the dormers at Nos. 37 and 86 make a positive contribution to the street-scene. I have determined the appeal proposal on its individual planning merits and within the context of the character and appearance of the existing building and the immediate locality. The existence of the other identified front dormers in the area does not justify the harm that I have found.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan 2012 which, amongst other matters, requires new development to be well-designed, and seeks excellent architectural quality with respect to changes to existing buildings, with regard being paid to achieving appropriate scale and appearance for a particular context. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Chapter 12 of the Framework which requires high quality design.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Leonard

INSPECTOR