
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 October 2019

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/19/3233213

29 The Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 8PL

- 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 and Mrs Diver against the decision of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 19/00551/FULH, dated 21 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 May 2019.
 - The development is a hip to gable roof extensions, extend existing dormer to rear, rooflights to front – retrospective application.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. At the time of my site visit, I noted that the works had been carried out in accordance with the submitted plans. I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the rear dormer window upon the character and appearance of the site, and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site includes a detached dwelling constructed in a traditional design. Whilst the neighbouring two-storey houses have varying appearances, they share the same traditional design approach. To the rear of the site is Hillway, which contains similar detached dwellings. Furthermore, there is significant variation in the levels of properties within the surrounding area.
5. There is some variation in the set back of dwellings from the highway edge in The Drive. However, the degree of this is relatively limited, which reduces the screening effect of other dwellings. Furthermore, owing to the topography of the area and the relatively open character of The Drive arising from the number of detached dwellings, views of the side elevation of 29 The Drive are possible. As such, the side walls of the dormer can be clearly seen, most notably from the higher land within The Drive.
6. Consequently, the character of the site and surrounding area is eroded owing to the dormer having a significant bulk and massing that has resulted in the loss of a significant proportion of the rear roof slope. This means that the

dormer window cannot be considered to be incidental to the main body of the house and conflicts with the traditional forms of architecture prevalent elsewhere within the vicinity. Furthermore, the increasing in massing results in a loss of the characteristic openness of the property and the wider environs.

7. The design of the dormer window has the effect of giving the dwelling an appearance akin to a three-storey dwelling. This is of concern owing to the presence of a significant number of dwellings to the rear of the site, which gives the development a greater degree of prominence.
8. This is exacerbated by the fenestration pattern within the dormer, which differs from the lower storeys of the house. The result of this is that a discordant form of development has been created. Whilst there are trees adjacent to the rear boundary, the height of the development is such that these do not offer a significant screening effect.
9. In addition, views of the dormer window are possible from Hillway. Whilst these views occur relatively infrequently, the significant contrast in design between the appeal property and other dwellings in the vicinity is injurious to the character of the site and surrounding area.
10. I acknowledge that the dormer does not project towards neighbouring properties and is set back from the roof ridge, the eaves and the side walls of the dwelling. However, these set backs are relatively small and therefore do not serve to adequately mitigate the inappropriate massing of the dormer.
11. Whilst it is evident that some dwellings within the wider area have been the subject of extensions, I do not have the full information regarding the circumstances of these. This lessens the weight that can be attributed to them as part of my assessment. Furthermore, extensions comparable to the scheme before me, and particularly dormers, do not occur particularly frequently within the surrounding area and tend to be smaller than constructed at the appeal site. As a result, I do not find that the presence of other extensions elsewhere outweighs the harm as previously identified.
12. I note that the site is not within a conservation area and does not contain a listed building. However, the site and its surroundings are of a distinctive character, which has been eroded by the development. I have therefore given weight to this.
13. In consequence, conclude that the development has a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the site and the wider area. The development therefore fails to comply with the requirements of Policies CP4 and KP2 of the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy (2007); Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Southend-on-Sea Development Management Document (2015); and the Design and Townscape Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2009).
14. These policies, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that developments be of appropriate massing; respect the character and scale of neighbourhoods; maintain the character of residential areas, securing good relationships with existing developments; be subservient to the original dwelling; and, in the case of roof extensions, respect the style, scale and form of the existing roof design and the character of the wider townscape

Other Matter

15. I have given the personal circumstances of the appellant careful consideration. However, I am mindful that, in general, planning decisions regarding land use need to be made in the public interest. Therefore, I find that these do not outweigh the unacceptable nature of the development.

Conclusion

16. For the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR