



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2019

by C Beeby BA (Hons) MIPROW

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G2625/D/19/3234926
155 Christchurch Road, Norwich NR2 3PQ

- 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 David Milne against the decision of Norwich City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00540/F, dated 10 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The host dwelling lies on a tree-lined residential street of detached dwellings of a generous scale and a generally similar age and appearance. Whilst there is some variety in design, these are characterised by their similar type and the use of hipped roof designs. Roofs are generally unaltered by features such as dormer windows. These similarities produce a continuity of design which contributes positively to the appearance of the area. The host dwelling's appearance is characteristic of the area. It is set slightly forward of its neighbour at No 57. This increases the visibility of its front and side roof slopes from the street.
4. Whilst the roadside trees are mature and substantial, dwellings are clearly visible behind them and their visibility would be increased in winter due to seasonal leaf loss, as they are generally of a deciduous species. Boundary walls, fences and verges have a limited scale which does not significantly affect the visibility of the properties behind due to their scale and location in close proximity to the highway. Therefore I do not concur with the submission that the contribution of dwellings to the appearance of the street scene is marginal.
5. The appeal proposes the creation of a bedroom and en-suite bathroom within the property's loft space. This would be facilitated by the insertion of dormer windows within the front, rear and one of the side slopes of the dwelling's hipped roof.

6. The side and front roof slopes are visible in views from Christchurch Road. The side dormer window would extend from the roof slope by a significant degree, so that its outer corner would project slightly forward of the dwelling's side elevation. It would occupy much of the side roof slope. The front dormer window would be smaller and would have less projection forward from the roof. However, it would be located towards the top of the roof, which would increase its visibility. Whilst neither window would increase the height of the roof and the building's footprint would be unaltered, both windows would appear excessively prominent in the street scene due to their scale and position within the roof slopes. This undue prominence would be exacerbated by the position of the dwelling forward of its neighbour.
7. The contemporary materials of the proposed dormer windows would additionally draw the eye due to their prominent position. As a result of the above factors, the windows would appear as an incongruous contemporary feature in an area characterised by the similar age, type and roof design of surrounding development, and the lack of similar features within roofs in the vicinity.
8. I acknowledge that the design of the proposal was amended to seek to respond to the Council's concerns over the life of the planning application. I note the submission that the appeal proposal represents the only means for the appellant to achieve the desired additional space. Nevertheless, planning is concerned with land use in the public interest, and consequently neither of these matters has any substantive bearing on my conclusions on the main issue of the appeal.
9. My attention has been drawn to a scheme on Jessopp Road, which lies near to the appeal site. Notwithstanding this, it appears likely that the development concerned was determined against a different policy context, and consequently I do not consider that it sets a precedent for the current scheme. Moreover, even if the development and circumstances were similar, it would not inevitably provide an example that should be followed even if harm would result. Accordingly, the other development does not alter my conclusions as to the unacceptability of the current proposal.
10. I acknowledge the support of interested parties for the proposal. However, this does not include substantive evidence which leads me to an alternative view on the main issue of the appeal, in this instance.
11. Thus, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It consequently conflicts with Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan (2014), which states that development should respect, enhance and respond to the character of the area. Further conflict exists with the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out that developments should be visually attractive and should add to the overall quality of the area, and that great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative design which fits in with the overall form and layout of its surroundings.

Conclusion

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

C Beeby - INSPECTOR