



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 December 2019 by Emma Worby BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by P J Davies BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M1520/D/19/3238683

7 Downesway, Benfleet, SS7 1EE

- 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 Marie Templar against the decision of Castle Point Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0555/FUL, dated 25 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear and two storey side extension and loft conversion with rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeals Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is occupied by a semi-detached bungalow located within a residential cul-de-sac, which is made up of other similarly formed and scaled properties. Owing to this, there is a strong uniformity and a pleasing visual rhythm to the character and appearance of the street scene. The proposal would include a hip to gable loft conversion to accommodate a dormer window to the rear of the dwelling along with a two-storey extension to the side of the dwelling and a single storey extension to the rear to replace an existing conservatory. The Council have raised no concerns regarding the rear dormer or single storey rear extension, and I have no reason to come to a view contrary to this.
5. However, the hip to gable loft conversion would make the dwelling unsymmetrical with the attached neighbouring property, No.8 Downesway. It would also be out of keeping with most other properties in Downesway which have hipped roofs and are largely single storey in nature. The proposed rear dormer and rear extension would not be visible from the streetscene. However,

although the irregular shape of the appeal site may result in some of the side extension being shielded from view, due to its two-storey nature and the changes to the roof form, it would be highly visible from the public realm and therefore would have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the area. Due to the disruption to the visual symmetry, the proposal would be an incongruous addition to the streetscene and would have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area.

6. For the reasons above I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to policy EC2 of the Castle Point Borough Local Plan (1998) which seeks to provide a high standard of design which shall be appropriate to its setting, along with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework. It would also be contrary to policy RDG7 of the Castle Point Borough Council Residential Design Guidance SPD (2013) which requires roof extensions to be proportionate to the dwelling and be in keeping with those surrounding it.

Other Matters

7. My attention has been drawn to three examples of similar development within the surrounding area including a similar hip to gable loft conversion at No.20 Downesway which also has resulted in an unsymmetrical pair of dwellings within the same cul-de-sac. Although it does create an unsymmetrical pair of dwellings within the streetscene, the development at No.20 does not include a side extension and is therefore smaller in nature than the proposal before me. Also, the Council have stated that this may have been carried out under permitted development rights. Therefore, it has been constructed under different circumstance and its presence would not make the proposal acceptable. The other two examples are located within different settings to that of the appeal site and therefore are not directly comparable.
8. The appellant has stated that the proposal may be permissible under permitted development rights. However, no evidence has been provided to support this and therefore cannot be taken into consideration. I also note that the proposal would make use of space which is currently unused by the occupant of the dwelling and would create privacy in the rear garden. However, these benefits for the appellant would not outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusions and Recommendation

9. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Emma Worby

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

10. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

P J Davies INSPECTOR