



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2020 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Andrew Owen MA BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/19/3240840

2 Sunnymede, Chigwell, IG7 6ES

- 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 Mark Gurrieri against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/1894/19, dated 31 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with front, side and rear dormers with four roof lights: including raising the ridge.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

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

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupants of 4A Sunnymede, having particular regard privacy.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site accommodates a two-storey detached dwelling with a two-storey side extension and a single-storey extension to the rear. It lies on the western side of Sunnymede, a cul-de-sac within an established residential area. The appeal dwelling forms part of a row of three properties (Nos.4A, 2 and 2A) of similar design including pitched roof front gables clad with timber boarding or tiles that slightly overhang their respective ground floors. These distinctive front gables, all of similar height, give a strong rhythm to the built form along this part of the road. I observed similarly designed properties to the south of the appeal site, whilst to the north there are some more recently built properties that feature steeply pitched roofs, timber cladding and roof dormers.
-

5. The proposal would result in the raising of the roof ridge by around 1.5 metres to allow for a loft conversion with dormers to the front, side and rear. The proposed development attempts to replicate the underlying character and appearance of the area by providing a pitched roof, and by incorporating a front dormer with a pitched roof, similar to that which can be seen on the more modern buildings near the entrance to Sunnymede. However those other houses are of a very different design so are not comparable to the house at the appeal site and its immediate neighbours.
6. In this case, the resultant height of the roof would be significantly greater than that of the adjacent houses and so would appear incongruous with its immediate neighbours. The development would fail to appear as a proportionate extension and would drastically alter the appearance of the appeal property and thus the cohesive, symmetrical row of buildings it forms part of. Also the incorporation of three dormers would further increase the bulk and prominence of the proposed roof and would therefore also contribute to the erosion of the character and appearance of the area.
7. Furthermore, when seen from the rear, the resultant dwelling would appear awkward due to the contrast between the disproportionate height of the roof, the bulky dormer additions and the existing single storey extension.
8. I therefore find the proposal would not adequately tie-in with the existing dwelling and would result in a visually discordant house that would unbalance the rhythm of the built form along this section of Sunnymede.
9. Given the above, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and conflict with Policies CP2(iv) and DBE10(i) of the Epping Forest District Adopted Local Plan and Alterations (the 'adopted Local Plan') and emerging Policy DM9 of the Epping Forest Local Plan Submission Version 2017 (the 'emerging Local Plan') which together seek to ensure proposals show high quality design, and safeguard the character and appearance of the area and the street scene. This is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which aims to ensure proposals are sympathetic to local character.

Living conditions

10. The proposal includes a side dormer which would face the roof of No.4A to the south. Although the Council is concerned this would lead to a loss of privacy for the occupiers of the neighbouring property, I am satisfied there would be no significant adverse impact in this regard as the proposed side dormer would not face any neighbouring windows serving habitable rooms and would not directly overlook the private rear outdoor amenity space of No.4A. The proposal would thus not harm the living conditions of the occupants of No.4A with regards to loss of privacy.
11. The development therefore accords with Policy DBE9 of the adopted Local Plan and Policy DM9 of the emerging Local Plan which together aim to ensure new development and residential extensions respect the privacy of occupiers of neighbouring buildings. These aims are consistent with the Framework which aims to ensure a high standard of amenity for residents.

Other matters

12. The appellant refers to the permitted development process which allows for the erection of dormers similar to those which are proposed. This has little bearing on the case before me as the increase in height to the roof ridge prevents the proposal from benefitting from permitted development. I therefore do not attribute material weight to this point.
13. I acknowledge the appellant's personal family needs with regards to the provision of additional space. Although I sympathise with these personal considerations, I consider that the permanent harm to the public realm through the erection of the proposed extensions outweighs the private benefits to the current occupants.

Recommendation

14. Although I find the extensions would not adversely impact the living conditions of the occupants of 4A Sunnymede with regards to loss of privacy, an absence of harm in this regard does not lend positive weight to the proposal and so could not outweigh the negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.
15. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR