



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 12 October 2020

by A Parkin BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/20/3256765
67 Little Bushey Lane, Bushey WD23 4RA

- 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 Ben Amrany against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0297/HSE, dated 26 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is a conversion of loft to habitable room with side & rear dormer windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Contrary to what is contained at Section E of the appeal form, the description of the proposed development has changed from that contained on the application form; a revised plan was also submitted as part of the application process. I have used the description of development from the Council's Decision Notice in the banner heading above, removing superfluous words, and I have considered the revised plan¹ in determining this appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal concerns a property within a residential area, which comprises garden-fronted detached and semi-detached dwellings, with off-street parking. The dwellings are of a range of different sizes and designs some of which have been extended or altered. Little Bushey Lane slopes downhill in a generally northerly direction as it passes the appeal dwelling.
5. The appeal dwelling is a substantial, mock-Tudor building with a square-hipped roof, albeit with a small flat 'crown' at the top, and a 2-storey front gable feature positioned slightly off-centre. Whilst the front elevation of the building is not symmetrical, there is some balance to its appearance, particularly as a result of the unaltered hipped roof.

¹ Ref. DWL 01b Existing and Proposed Plans - 2020-04-17

6. The appeal development would introduce dormer windows onto the rear and both sides of the hipped roof. Two rooflights would be inserted onto the front roof slope and the works would enable the loft of the dwelling to be converted into a bedroom with en-suite. The dormers would all be of a similar design and would be positioned centrally on the respective roof slopes. The scale and position of the proposed dormer to the rear means that it would be hidden from public view.
7. However, both of the proposed side dormers would be readily visible from Little Bushey Lane, where their size, massing and position would make them visually prominent features. Whilst there are side dormer extensions elsewhere in the area, including one at No 71, they are not a common or characteristic feature.
8. Furthermore, the proposed southern dormer would be significantly larger than the northern one, extending from just below the top of the roof to just above the eaves. In contrast, the proposed northern dormer would have a similar height but would be shorter in length, and so would finish well above eaves level. This would result in an unbalanced, visually awkward roofscape in views from the front.
9. I note from the Council's Planning and Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2006 (PDGSPD), Part E, Section 6 - *Roof extensions, roof lights roof terraces and balconies*, that dormers should generally be located within the rear roof slope (sub-section f) and that side dormers will normally be resisted (sub-section p). Whilst this is guidance rather than part of the development plan, in the context of the appeal building and the roofscapes along the street I give the PDGSPD weight.
10. The appellant refers to a very similar proposal at the appeal property that was granted planning permission² in May 2002. This scheme, which predates the current development plan, the PDGSPD and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (the Framework), was not implemented and the permission has lapsed. The appellant has provided no evidence to support their comments regarding the current and previous design policies. Whilst the visual context of the street is likely to be similar, I give this planning permission very limited and non-determinative weight.
11. The proposal would accord with aspects of the PDGSPD³. However, the scale and massing of both side dormers would make them obtrusive features on the roof. The greater size of the southern dormer would make it a particularly incongruous feature and furthermore, the consequent visual imbalance with the northern dormer would exacerbate this visual harm.
12. For these reasons, the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. It would, therefore, conflict with Policy CS22 (securing a high quality and accessible environment) of the Hertsmere Local Plan Core Strategy 2013; Policy SADM30 (design principles) of the Hertsmere Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016; and, with guidance contained in the PDGSPD and the Framework.

² LPA Ref. TP/2002/0193

³ Including the dormers' central location within the roof face and taking up less than 60% of it.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Parkin

INSPECTOR