



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2020

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17/02/2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/20/3251816

23 Connaught Avenue, Grays, Essex, RM16 2SR

- 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 Scott Tracy against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01317/HHA, dated 28 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a loft conversion.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. I have noted that the development has been constructed and the Council's decision describes the proposal as '(Retrospective) hip-to-gable loft conversion with rear dormer, 3 front rooflights and Juliet balcony'. It is clear from the plans that this describes the proposal more accurately and I have assessed the appeal on this basis.

Reasons

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings and the area. The Council's development plan policies CSTP22 and PMD2 in the Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development DPD (as amended) 2015 require that development is of a high quality design and contributes positively towards creating a sense of place. The Thurrock Residential Alterations and Extensions Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that extensions respect and enhance the character of the original dwelling.
4. Connaught Avenue is a residential road of mainly inter-war built properties of varying styles and designs. The appeal dwelling was built as one of a pair of semi-detached bungalows with hipped main roofs and smaller projecting gabled roofs. The many hipped roofs in the street create space between dwellings and contribute positively to the area's attractive, spacious character. Whilst many properties have had alterations or extensions, most of the semi-detached dwellings still retain a strong degree of symmetry which gives a sense of cohesion and adds to the traditional, suburban character of the area.
5. The main hipped roof of the appeal dwelling has been altered to a gabled roof. As the adjoining semi-detached dwelling at no 25 retains its original hipped roof, the alteration has severely unbalanced the pair, harming its character and

- appearance. It has also reduced the space between the dwelling and the neighbouring detached house at no 21, detracting from the spacious nature of the street. The development is clearly contrary to the Council's guidance in its 'Residential Alterations and Extensions Design Guide SPD' which says that roof conversions will only be acceptable where the addition does not spoil the roof form.
6. The rear dormer that has been constructed is very large and extends across the full width of the rear roof slope. The top of the roof is set only slightly below the ridge of the main roof. As such, it is clearly contrary to the Council's SPD which says that dormers should not occupy more than three fifths of the roof width if the height exceeds three fifths of the ridge to eaves distance. Its size and position mean that it is clearly seen from the street and it appears unduly bulky and overly dominant.
 7. The mid-grey cladding on the external side wall of the dormer contrasts starkly with the white rendered walling and tiled roofing materials of the main part of the dwelling and this draws attention to the disproportionate size and scale of the dormer, the incongruous form of the new roof and the awkward junctions between the dormer, the new roof and the existing projecting gabled roof. I have noted that the appellant's intention was to match the grey cladding of the adjoining neighbour's front projecting gable (and to clad his own to match in future) and that there are a variety of external materials within the street, including identical cladding on a detached dwelling at no 3. However, the position and extent of the cladding on the dormer differs from that on both the neighbouring dwelling and others in the street and is not appropriate in this context for the reasons given earlier in this paragraph.
 8. I have noted that the appellant instructed a loft company to carry out the development and assumed that as the plans were submitted to the Council's Building Control team that the works were being carried out in accordance with any necessary permission and regulations. However, the Building Regulations are a separate matter from planning permission.
 9. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development, by reason of its form, size, scale and materials, has significantly harmed the character and appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings and the area and is contrary to development plan policies CSTP22 and PMD2 and to the Council's SPD. The appeal is dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector