
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 March 2021

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/20/3262486

The Schloss, 15 Hardy Avenue, Dartford DA1 2FE

- 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 Mott against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DA/20/00664/FUL, dated 8 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with gable end front dormers and conservation roof light and box rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposed development upon the appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The preamble to Policy DP7 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan 2017 (the Policies Plan) advocates rear roof dormer extensions to be set in to the roof plane, down from the ridgeline and in from the side cheeks. However, the preamble also promotes loft conversions to be designed such that dormers do not dominate the appearance of the existing dwelling and create a 'top-heavy' effect.
4. Although the rear roof extension would be set in from the side gables of the roof slope and be set below and above the ridge and eaves respectively, the proposal would occupy almost the entire rear roof slope of the property. The extension would appear as a large and bulky addition at roof level and create a dwelling of unbalanced appearance as a result of being disproportionately overloaded by built form at the top of the property. The roof addition would be visually harmful by virtue of it appearing as a dominant feature within the roofscape and an excessively large addition at the top of the dwelling.
5. To the rear of the appeal property is an area of open land (Heath Lane Open Space). The rear of the appeal property, along with others within the development, are clearly visible from this public open space. I saw that the properties within this relatively recently constructed development that are publicly visible from this open land have not been altered or extended at roof level. Therefore, the roof extension would be out of keeping with the existing development in the locality that has retained its original roof form and design.

This would be an additional visual harm arising from the proposed development to that of the visual harm identified to the host property itself.

6. I note that the Council considers that the dormers would not cause harm to the visual appearance of the road frontage and the development would have an acceptable impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, no additional parking would be required as a result of the development. Nonetheless, in planning terms these matters would be required to be acceptable in their own right to make the proposed development acceptable.
7. I have been directed to other examples of dormer roof extensions within Hardy Avenue that have been granted planning permission. From the information provided it appears that those roof dormers were proposed within either the front or side roof slopes of those properties, which is a different situation to that of the proposed rear roof dormer extension that is of concern here.
8. I have also been provided with an aerial photograph that identifies examples of roof dormers within the immediate area. A number of those examples highlighted again relate to frontage dormers. It appears from the image that those rear dormers highlighted are small and do not occupy a large part of the rear roof slopes. One example appears to relate to a property where the gable of that roof design faces onto Heath Lane Open Space. These examples are not directly comparable to that of the proposed rear dormer roof extension that is before me and, therefore, they hold little weight in favour of the proposal.
9. Heath Lane Open Space is surrounded by properties to all sides of varying ages and styles. I saw that there are large flat roofed rear roof extensions relating to some of these properties which are clearly visible from this open land. Indeed, I have been provided with aerial photographs that draw my attention to particular examples. Notwithstanding this, I have not been advised when those developments took place and, therefore, those roof extensions could have been subject to a different development plan context and/or may have benefitted from permitted development rights. Having regard to the development plan and those policies that are currently in place, the existence of other roof extensions in the wider locality does not outweigh or justify the harm that I have identified in this case.
10. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the appearance of the host property and surrounding area. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with Policies DP2 and DP7 of the Policies Plan that seek, amongst other matters, development to be of good design, respond to, reinforce and enhance positive aspects of the locality and to consider how the roof form of proposals relates to neighbouring buildings as well as the wider locality.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR