



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2020

by Jan Hebblethwaite MA Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/20/3255397

28 Maple Avenue, Upminster, Essex RM14 2LE

- 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 and Mrs Healy against the decision of the London Borough of Havering Council.
 - The application Ref P0241.20 dated 18 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion consisting of Hip to Gable conversion, rear dormer over existing and current side extension. Front Velux(s)
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the visual effect of the proposed development on the appearance of the street scene and of the host property.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is situated in a wholly residential area, consisting of mainly semi-detached houses which appear to be of a similar age. Some, such as the host property, have a distinctive design, typical of its age.
4. The host property has been extended previously, by the creation of a first-floor side extension over the garage, with a gable end roof. The extension is stepped down and back from the hipped roof of the original house.
5. When view from the street, the appeal proposal would change the original hipped roof to a gable end and introduce three velux windows into the roof slope.
6. The Development Plan for the area consists of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document ("DPD") produced by the Council and the London Plan published in March 2021. Policy DC61 of the DPD deals with urban design and states that planning permission will only be granted for development which maintains enhances or improves the character and appearance of the local area.
7. One of the criteria for an acceptable development under Policy DC61 is that it must respond to distinctive local building forms and ...respect the scale massing and height of the surrounding physical context.

8. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on residential extensions and alterations ("SPD") also considers that a hipped-to-gable roof conversion can lead to an unbalancing effect (paragraph 8.1).
9. Policy D3 of the London Plan deals with form and layout of development and at paragraph D(1) states that development proposals should enhance local context by delivering buildings that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout...scale, appearance, and shape with due regard to existing and emerging street hierarchy building types and proportions. Paragraph D(11) requires that development proposals respect, enhance and utilise ...the architectural features that contribute towards the local character.
10. The appeal property and its attached neighbour have distinctive frontages with black and white patterning and long steep eaves to the front gable. As a result, they are symmetrical and balanced. The existing extension to the host property has been designed to appear subordinate to the original house. By contrast, the proposed development would create a dominant roof gable end roof, the appearance of which would be emphasised by the velux windows. The proposal would affect the symmetrical appearance of the two houses, to the detriment of the street scene and the host property. The appeal proposal would not therefore comply with Policy DC61, the SPD or the London Plan.
11. The appeal proposal also includes a rear dormer across the whole width of the house. It has been designed to comply with the SPD in that it would not be visible from the street and would be below the ridge of the main roof of the original house. However, paragraph 8.3 of the SPD requires that dormers should be contained well within the body of the roof, set back from the eaves, and with the sides set well in from any gables or party walls. The proposed development would not conform to this guidance and would have a detrimental effect on the appearance of the host property.
12. On my site visit, I viewed the other properties mentioned by the Appellants in their personal statement. All but one of these examples has the same distinctive design as the appeal property, and they all have side extensions which have a hip-to-gable conversion of their roofs. However, in each case, the extension is subordinate to the original property and none have a first floor built over the garage. The bulk and massing of these properties as converted do not have the same impact as that proposed at the appeal property. The one remaining example is of a house of a quite different design and I do not consider it to be comparable to the appeal property.
13. I have also taken into account the needs of the appellants' family. However, the appeal proposal is for permanent development to serve a recognised but nevertheless temporary need. As such, that need does not outweigh the harm which I have identified above.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jan Hebblethwaite

INSPECTOR