



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2021

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/21/3269852

65 Chalkwell Esplanade, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, SS0 8JH

- 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 Stephen Smith against the decision of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02086/FULH, dated 8 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Creation of a roof terrace to a single family dwelling'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council's decision describes the proposal as 'alter roof, form roof terrace to existing flat crown roof and install frameless glass balustrade' and as this describes the proposal in more detail I have used this as the basis for my decision.

Reasons

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. The development plan includes policies KP2 and CP4 in the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy (2007) and policies DM1 and DM3 in the Council's Development Management Document (2015). Those policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that proposals improve the urban environment through quality design, secure a good relationship with existing development and have regard to the Council's Design and Townscape Guide SPD, respect the character of the site and its surroundings in terms of its architectural approach including its form and massing.
4. The appeal dwelling is a traditional, arts and crafts style design of two storeys which has been sensitively altered with roof accommodation in a crown roof and two projecting, glazed front gables. I have noted that the property's alterations have been referred to as an example of good design in the Council's Design and Townscape Guide. The property retains much of its original character through its roof tiles, leaded windows and front canopy and has an attractive appearance which contributes positively to the character of this residential area of much altered, large traditional dwellings and small blocks of flats.

5. The proposed development would provide a roof terrace over the existing flat area of the crown roof. The ridge height of one of the existing gabled projections would be increased on the western side elevation by around 1m to provide screening which I have noted was introduced in response to the Council's pre-application concerns regarding visibility in the street scene. This would result in a small false gable feature adjacent to the frameless glass balustrade. The balustrade would sit slightly above the ridge of the roof but would only be seen clearly in the central part of the front elevation.
6. The Design and Townscape Guide advises that balconies created by cutting into the roof slope are more appropriate in some areas although it does not specify which areas. At my visit I saw that glazed balconies are a common feature in the street scene. Contrary to the Council's assertion that they exist only at first floor level and within the overall roof profile, there are several at both first and second floor levels (including glazed dormers) although they generally sit below ridge level. Given the amount of glazing in the front elevations of many properties in the street, the proposed glazed balustrade would not be overly intrusive.
7. However, when approaching from the west, the alteration to the roof on the western elevation would be noticeable within the street scene and whilst it would result in the crown roof being made more discrete, the form and massing created by the stepped ridge would appear particularly awkward and contrived. I also agree with the Council that the false gable would serve to emphasise rather than improve the roof alterations. Whilst the glazed balustrade would not be a particularly noticeable feature, the proposed roof alterations would detract significantly from the dwelling and the street scene.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons stated above, I conclude that the proposed development, by reason of the roof alterations, would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area and would be contrary to the development plan policies referred to above. The appeal is dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector