



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 September 2021

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 September 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/21/3273726

15 Mary Rose Close, Chafford Hundred, Grays RM16 6LY

- 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 Matthew Barnett against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01503/HHA, dated 30 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion consisting of 2 x skylights to front and 2 x dormer to rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area and on the living conditions of the occupiers of 14 Mary Rose Close with particular regard to visual impact.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a 2-storey detached house within a modern estate style residential area wherein properties are similar in age and vary in design, type and size. The appeal dwelling and the immediate area to which it belongs are not identified as a designated heritage asset.
4. Two dormer extensions are proposed on the rear roof slope of No 15 with external materials to match those of the host building. Each new dormer would be noticeably set in from all four edges of the main roof in line with the advice provided in the Thurrock Design Guide: Residential Alterations and Extensions SPD (SPD). Even so, each new dormer would be considerable in width and height and collectively they would cover a significant part of the rear roof slope. That each proposed dormer would include a flat roof would cause them to appear as overly large 'box like' additions, the bulk of which would give the host building an awkward top-heavy appearance.
5. Where dormer windows are visible but on less prominent side or rear roofs, as would be the case here, Table 1 of the SPD notes that the width of an individual dormer should not exceed 2-metres and that dormers should not occupy more than one half of the width of the roof. From the dimensions given

on the submitted plans, the proposal would not adhere to these guidelines. On that basis, the appeal scheme would conflict with these aspects of the SPD.

6. At the site visit, I saw that some properties in the local area include rear dormers although none were directly comparable with the design and scale of the proposal before me. I also acknowledge that the proposed dormers would not be readily visible from the road in front of the property. However, the new dormers would be evident from the gardens and windows of some properties near to the site. Specifically, from the back garden of 14 Mary Rose Close, just beyond the rear boundary of the site, the new dormer on the westernmost half of the roof would be highly conspicuous given its scale and elevated position. In these views, and when seen from other nearby properties, the proposed dormers would visually dominate the rear elevation of No 15 and appear as an unsympathetic and incongruous form of development in the local area even among the varied built form within it.
7. On the first main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policies CSTP22 and PMD2 of the Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (CS) and the SPD. These policies and guidance promote high quality design and require development to positively contribute to the character of the local area. It is also at odds with the recently updated revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that development should be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.

Living conditions

8. Of the properties close to the site, it is the occupiers of No 14 that are most likely to be affected by the appeal scheme since the back garden of this property adjoins that of No 15. From the rear garden of No 14, views of the new dormers would be at reasonably close range particularly the new addition on the westernmost half of the roof. In these views, I consider that the presence of the new dormers would be so imposing as to overbear on the occupiers of No 14, which would feel intrusive.
9. On the second main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 14. As such, it is contrary to CS Policy PMD1, which states that development will not be permitted where it would cause unacceptable effects on the amenity of neighbouring occupants. It would also conflict with the Framework, which states that planning decisions should ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above, and taking into account the absence of objections from others, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR