

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 18 October 2021

by Martin Chandler BSc, MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X1545/D/21/3280905

11 St Stephens Road, Cold Norton CM3 6JE

- 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 Bobby Thurling against the decision of Maldon District Council.
 - The application Ref HOUSE/MAL/21/00285, dated 17 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is Erection of a single storey rear extension and front dormer and the enlargement of existing front and rear dormers. Installation of sliding doors to the rear elevation and a rooflight to front roof slope. Alterations to fenestration, entrance doors and the external materials of the host dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the decision notice and subsequent appeal form, rather than the original planning application form. This is because it is a clearer and more concise description, and I am satisfied that in using this description, the interests of the main parties are not compromised.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is occupied by a semi-detached bungalow that has been extended to the side and which has a pitched roof dormer window located to both the front and rear roof slopes. The existing dormer windows are not set centrally within the roof, and instead, are located towards the gable end elevation of the property.
5. The adjoining semi-detached bungalow has large flat roof dormer windows located within the front and rear facing roof slopes. Indeed, dormer windows are a common and prevalent feature within the surrounding built environment. Accordingly, it is the appellant's view that the proposal would be experienced in this context, and that it would add to the examples of dormer windows within the locality.

6. The proposal would seek to introduce two dormer windows to the front of the property with a gap between them. The roof additions would be wide and would have hipped roofs. Due to their width, the proposed roof form for the windows would have very shallow pitches. This would add to the visual bulk of the additions, but would also be at odds with the simple pitched roof form of the existing building. The use of shallow pitched, hipped roofs would also contrast with the majority of examples of dormer windows in the surrounding area, the majority of which are of flat roof construction, including the adjoining neighbour.
7. There are examples of pitched roof dormer windows, however, these are generally narrower, with a steeper roof pitch. Accordingly, they largely sit as sensitive and well-considered additions to the roofslope. With regard to the appeal proposal, the pitched roofs would be overspanned and too shallow, and as a consequence, they would appear as visually intrusive and unsympathetic additions to the front of the existing building, at odds with the prevailing character and appearance of the area.
8. To the rear, the proposed dormer window would almost span the full width of the extended dwelling, as well as being located close to the ridge and eaves height of the building. Accordingly, due to the substantial bulk of this element of the proposal and the limited amount of original roof that would remain visible, the rear facing alteration would take on the appearance of an additional storey. As identified above, large dormer windows are commonplace within the surroundings, indeed, the neighbouring property benefits from a generous rear facing dormer window. However, in general, existing examples are more sympathetic to the form of the existing building, filling less of the roofslope, and retaining the appearance of a roof addition, rather than an additional storey. Moreover, window proportions are also generally more well-considered, in contrast to the small openings identified for this element of the proposal.
9. Due to the sheer size of the proposed rear dormer window, as well as its poorly proportioned fenestration, this element would not achieve the more sensitive design approach found in surrounding examples. Instead, the rear facing dormer window would be an overly dominant addition to the building and when this is combined with the prominence of the rear elevation, the proposal would cause demonstrable harm to the surrounding built environment.
10. Accordingly, for the reasons identified above, and when taken as a whole, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore fail to accord with Policies D1 and H4 of the Maldon District Approved Local Development Plan (2017). Taken together, these seek amongst other things, development which respects and enhances local character and context.

Conclusion

11. The appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Chandler

INSPECTOR