



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2021

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V1505/D/21/3280019

18 Mercer Road, Billericay, Essex, CM11 1DH

- 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 Matt Rouston against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00531/FULL, dated 15 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is First floor front/side extension, first floor rear extension and loft conversion incorporating a new raised roof with front, rear and side bonnet dormers.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. In the interests of clarity, in the banner heading above I have referred to the description of the proposal given by the appellant on the appeal form as this gives a clear description of the type of development proposed which reflects that used by the Council in their decision notice.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development upon:
 - the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area; and,
 - the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site relates to a 2 storey detached house in a residential street opposite a junction where Mercer Road joins Meade Road. Houses in the surrounding area are set back from the footway behind front gardens and driveways. The existing house has a 2 storey gable wing at the front linked to a 2 storey pitched roofed wing behind it. 2 single storey gable additions project from each of the wings at the front of the house, one of which contains a garage. The surrounding area comprises predominantly 2 storey detached houses with no common design. However, none that I saw during my site visit had front or side dormers in their roofs which appeared unaltered.

5. The proposed development would involve substantial alterations including increasing the roof heights of both 2 storey elements and adding 2 dormer windows on the front pitched roof, an additional window in the front gable and a side dormer. These additions would change the appearance of the host property into that of a 3 storey dwelling, albeit with accommodation in the roof space. I appreciate that roof conversions are not uncommon generally. However, in this case, the diversity of architectural forms within the host property roofscape to which the appellant refers would draw attention and highlight the difference between it and the unaltered roofscapes in the surrounding area. As such the proposed development would appear incongruous and out of character with the host house and others nearby.
6. I therefore conclude on this main issue that the proposed development would harm the appearance of the host property and appear incongruous and out of character with the 2 storey houses in the surrounding area. Because of its prominent position opposite a road junction, it would harm the character and appearance of the street scene. It would therefore conflict with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies (2007) (BDLP) and Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework) which seek to prevent development that would cause harm to the character of the surrounding area.

Living conditions

7. The proposed 2 storey rear projecting wing includes floor to ceiling bedroom windows with a Juliet balcony. It would extend beyond the rear building line of neighbouring houses on either side therefore limiting the extent of their gardens that would be visible from its windows. The windows would also be recessed which would to some extent limit sideways views out of them. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed development would not lead to an unacceptable level of overlooking into the rear gardens on either side of the appeal site. Whilst the windows would face towards the rear garden of No 14, and the side of the house, the distance between the 2 properties is such that there would be no mutual loss of privacy.
8. Overall, on this main issue I am satisfied that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties through overlooking and loss of privacy and would not therefore conflict with Policy BAS BE12 of the BDLP and Paragraph 130 of the Framework which seek to prevent development that would cause harm from overlooking and ensure a high standard of amenity.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR