
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2021

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/21/3279589

3A Middle Farm Close, Chieveley, Newbury RG20 8RJ

- 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 Martin and Kate Higgs against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00789/HOUSE, dated 31 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is formation of loft conversion with dormer window and velux roof lights with associated internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for formation of loft conversion with dormer window and velux roof lights with associated internal alterations at 3A Middle Farm Close, Chieveley, Newbury RG20 8RJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00789/HOUSE, dated 31 March 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing no. 03 E.
 - 3) The tiles to be used in the construction of the dormer window hereby permitted shall match those on the roof of the existing dwelling.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs Higgs against West Berkshire Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposed dormer window on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the local street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a modern two-storey, detached house which lies at the end of a short private cul-de-sac serving three other properties off Middle Farm Close. The dwelling is orientated gable-on to the High Street and it is set back behind dense roadside planting which creates an effective screen from the High Street throughout the year, even when the trees are not in leaf.

5. The proposed dormer window would be constructed using plain tiles to match the existing roof and zinc cladding with vertical standing seams on the walls. It would be positioned almost centrally within the roof slope on the southern side elevation. The structure would be set away from the roof edges and eaves, and it would sit below the main ridge. This would ensure that the dormer reads as a subordinate and proportionate addition to the roof. It would not imbalance the front elevation of the property, as has been suggested by the Council.
6. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: 'House Extensions' (2004) states that dormer windows should not be used to increase floorspace within the dwelling. However, that is not the purpose of the appeal scheme which has been designed to achieve headroom above the staircase to comply with the Building Regulations. This would create a larger volume than traditional gabled dormers, examples of which are seen elsewhere in Middle Farm Close. Nevertheless, the scale of the new dormer would not be unduly dominant and its appearance would be acceptable. The discreet position of the dwelling behind landscaping means that public visibility would be limited to a short stretch of Middle Farm Close from where the development would be viewed at a distance. The street scene of the High Street would be unaffected.
7. The Council has recently granted permission¹ for a dormer window at 4 Middle Farm Cottages which lies two doors away to the north. The approved design resulted from negotiation and has very strong similarities to the appeal scheme. That dormer will be considerably more prominent in comparison to the one being proposed at 3A Middle Farm Close. The Council's decision for No 4, which was made in the context of the same development plan policy and guidance, is a material consideration to which I have attached significant weight.
8. I conclude that the proposed dormer would harmonise with the character and appearance of the host dwelling and it would not cause any material harm to the local street scene. There would be compliance with Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 insofar as these seek high quality design that responds to local character.

Conditions

9. To provide certainty, I have attached a condition specifying the approved plan. I have also imposed a condition requiring the use of matching roof tiles, to secure harmonious architectural treatment.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR

¹ Council Ref. 20/01007/HOUSE