



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3635/D/21/3284730
74 Park Road, Ashford TW15 1EU

- 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 Michael Utterson against the decision of Spelthorne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00903/HOU, dated 27 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension, hip to gable loft conversion with rear dormer, and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background

2. There is an extant planning permission for a two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension to the host property (Ref: 21/00215/HOU) ('approved scheme'). I have had regard to that planning history, and that fallback position, in my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host property and the area; and
 - the living conditions of adjacent occupiers with particular regard to overlooking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The host property comprises a detached two storey dwelling, occupying a plot at the corner of Park Road and Coolgardie Road. I observed on my visit that the built form and grain of surrounding development is quite varied, and includes detached and semi-detached two storey houses, and bungalows. However, I observed that most dwellings, including some nearby two storey ones, are fairly modestly proportioned. There are examples of gabled and hipped roofs nearby, but notwithstanding occasional dormers, in the streetscene most properties, including the host, have simple and unencumbered roof slopes.

5. The hip to gable extensions here would be symmetrical, but compared to the approved scheme they would significantly increase the scale and bulk of the host. That would give the resultant dwelling a very dominant appearance in the streetscene, particularly due to its prominence on this corner plot, and the proximity of its northern gable to Coolgardie Road. As a consequence, it would appear out of scale with the generally more modest proportions, and more discreet appearance, of nearby dwellings.
6. That impact would be exacerbated by the large, flat-roofed dormer. Although it would be centrally located on the roof, and would be set slightly away from its edges, the dormer would occupy most of the rear roof slope. It would thus give the host a very top-heavy appearance. Whilst the appellant states that many similar dormers have been built elsewhere, and I observed a wrap-around dormer at 70 Park Road, this one would not respect this area's prevailing character. The harm it would cause would be very apparent at the end of the Coolgardie Road streetscene when approaching from the east.
7. Consequently, the scheme would conflict with Policy EN1 of the Spelthorne Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document 2009 ('SCS') which sets out, amongst other things, that development should respect, and make a positive contribution to, the streetscene, paying due regard to matters such as the scale, proportions, building lines and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 ('Framework') requirement for development to be sympathetic to local character.
8. Additionally, it would fail to comply with the broadly similar guidance in the Council's Design of Residential Extensions and New Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document 2011 ('SPD'), including its advice at paragraph 3.56 that well designed dormers should be set in a minimum of 1m from the roof edge and eaves, and 0.5m down from the ridge, and should not be over-dominant or out of proportion.

Living conditions

9. A degree of overlooking, particularly from upper floor windows, is common in urban areas such as this. However, given the proximity to the southern boundary of the full height glazing and Juliet-style balcony in the proposed rear dormer, there would be a direct and unimpeded view from that bedroom straight down into the garden of 72 Park Road.
10. As a result of that overlooking, along with a significant perception of being overlooked, the scheme would have a harmful impact on those occupants' living conditions.
11. Consequently, on this issue, the proposal would conflict with that part of SCS Policy EN1 which seeks to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjoining properties, and to avoid significant harmful impacts in terms of matters such as loss of privacy. It would also conflict with the similar advice at paragraph 3.57 of the SPD, and with the Framework's requirement to ensure a high standard of amenity.

Other matters

12. The scheme would provide enlarged and enhanced living accommodation for existing and any future occupants of the property, which is a modest benefit.

Planning Balance and Conclusions

13. I have found that the scheme would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area; and that it would also harm adjacent occupiers' living conditions. The scheme's modest benefits do not outweigh the harm that it would cause, and it would conflict with the development plan when considered as a whole.
14. Consequently, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR