



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2022

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/D/21/3287224

11 Elm Trees, Long Crendon HP18 9DG

- 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 D Hanlon, against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03694/APP, dated 17 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is a part first floor front extension, new pitched roof dormer and rooflight to front elevation, change flat roof on front dormer to pitched roof, garage conversion to habitable space and part two storey, part first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The main parties agreed to change the description of the proposed development originally given on the planning application form and it is this altered wording that I have used in the heading above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal concerns a detached dwelling with a flat roof dormer projection at the front. The proposed development includes putting a pitched roof over this and building a new pitched roof dormer. Rather than appearing more attractive or aesthetically pleasing, these would provide a jarring and disharmonious contrast with the flat roof form of such roof additions that is typically present in the vicinity. This would occur despite matters such as the size of the host roof and consequent gaps above, below and to the sides of these additions, as well as the use of materials to match those in the existing dwelling.
5. The dormer additions would relate most closely to such roof features at other properties, given matters such as their position and size. They would not therefore be rendered acceptable by relating to the substantially larger end or front gables that extend to the full height of the associated dwellings found nearby, as the Appellant suggests.

6. The Council's Residential Extensions Design Guide, Adopted May, 1991, indicates that dormers should generally have pitched roofs. However, this document is only advisory in its status and the word 'generally' suggests that there may be situations where this is not appropriate. Furthermore, the drawing of a pitched roof dormer is accompanied by text stating that 'small vertically proportioned dormers designed to respect the character of the house are normally acceptable'.
7. In this case the resultant pitched roof features would not be vertically proportioned due to their excessive width relative to height resulting in a horizontal emphasis, giving rise to a somewhat squat and bulky appearance. This would significantly exacerbate the impact of their incongruous and intrusive presence. Moreover, despite being set back, this would be readily apparent from the street with the front roofscape, as with other dwellings nearby, being a prominent feature of the streetscene.
8. The Appellant refers to the dwelling at 44 Elm Trees where there is a pitched roof dormer addition at the front. Nevertheless, I saw at my site visit that this is a particularly isolated and unusual instance with the original flat roof form generally being retained. Furthermore, I have not been provided with the full details and background to this case.
9. As a result, there is nothing to show that the Council's decision making has been unreasonably inconsistent. In any event, this example illustrates the adverse effect such alterations can have and should not be used to justify a development that would further erode the quality of the built environment. The Appellant suggests that the pitched roof additions would have a significantly better lifespan but there is no detailed evidence on this and it does not justify accepting a development that would result in such a detrimental impact.
10. For the above reasons, it is concluded that the character and appearance of the host dwelling and locality would be harmed. The development would therefore conflict with Policy BE2 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and Policy LC9 of the Long Crendon Parish Neighbourhood Plan, which intend, among other things, that new development should respect and complement local distinctiveness in terms of form and alterations to existing buildings reflect the character of surrounding buildings.
11. The development would also be at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework. This indicates that decisions should ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, which would not be achieved in this case.
12. I note the absence of any objections to the application from local residents or the Parish Council. However, this does not, in itself, confer acceptability and I must consider the appeal on its own merits.
13. Taking account of all other matters raised and due to the harm that would arise, it is determined that the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR