



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 January 2022

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J1725/D/21/3284247

14 Coward Road, Gosport, PO12 2LP

- 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 Christopher Blake against the decision of Gosport Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00129/FULL, dated 12 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is proposed loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for proposed loft conversion at 14 Coward Road, Gosport, PO12 2LP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00129/FULL, dated 12 March 2021, and the plans submitted with it, and subject to the conditions listed below.
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Procedural Matters

2. At the time of my site visit, the proposed dormer was already in place and I have therefore determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are: (a) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and Alverstoke Conservation Area; and (b) whether the absence of sufficient parking on site would be detrimental to highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The Council's reason for refusal and Delegated Report refer to the Anglesey Conservation Area, whereas the appeal site lies within the Alverstoke

Conservation Area (ACA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. A similar approach is to be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (Framework), as well as in policies LP10 and LP12 of the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2023 (adopted 2015) (GLP).

5. Whilst the Council have provided a map of the ACA, no other evidence has been submitted in relation to the conservation area designation. There is no assessment within the Delegated Report of the architectural and/or historical qualities of the area that contribute to its special interest or to the contribution that the appeal site makes to the conservation area as a whole. The Heritage Statement submitted by the Appellant with the original application is very brief and similarly provides no detailed assessment of the area.
6. I have, therefore, based my decision on the observations I made on my site visit. In that respect, the appeal site forms part of a small terrace of two storey properties on the northern side of Coward Road. Most retain a number of their original historic features and for this reason their combined frontages make an important contribution to the ACA, which includes similar terraces as well as semi-detached and detached properties from the same period. Even so, the area is also characterised by modern infill development or redevelopment, an example of which is found to the south east of the appeal site. To the west of the appeal site there is also a large courtyard of single storey flat roofed garages, which detracts from the character and appearance of the ACA.
7. At the rear of the appeal site is a two-storey outrigger, the other half of which is formed by a similar outrigger on 12 Coward Place (No.12). However, as I observed on my site visit, the rear of the appeal site is well screened by the surrounding properties that back on to it. The latter vary in terms of their built form, design and scale and a number have been extended at roof and upper floor levels through the addition of dormers, gable extensions and flat roofed extensions. This includes a dormer extension, similar to that proposed, on No.12.
8. The proposed dormer would be similar in scale and design to the existing dormer on No.12. Whilst glimpses of the latter are possible in long term views from Village Road, to the north, those views do not result in any harm to the features that contribute to the special character of the ACA. In comparison, the appeal proposal would largely be hidden and visible only from the rears of the properties that surround it. Those views would be of the dormer with the existing outrigger in the foreground, which would again partly screen it and reduce its visual impact. Whilst the Council emphasise that the dormer to No.12 pre-dates the current Framework and the Council's Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2014) (Design SPD), where roof alterations and dormers do exist, as on No.12 and other properties at the rear, they are an inherent part of the local context and the character of the area to which regard must be had.
9. Within that context, whilst I accept that the proposed dormer would involve a change to the appearance of the rear elevation, it would not, in my judgement, harm the character or appearance of the host property or the contribution that it makes to the ACA as a whole. As I confirmed above, the proposed roof

dormer would be sited at the rear and largely screened from public vantage points, albeit it would be visible from the rear of surrounding properties. It would sit above the eaves and below the ridge to the host property, and also be set in marginally from the common boundaries. In view of this and through the use of a pallet of materials to broadly match existing, I am satisfied that the proposed dormer would sit reasonably comfortably within the rear roofscape, that it would not be unduly dominant or visually prominent when viewed from the surrounding area, and, as a consequence, would not result in any harm to the character or appearance of the host property or the ACA as a whole.

10. Although the proposed dormer would occupy a large part of the rear roofscape and in that respect there would be conflict with the guidance in the Design SPD, as with all such guidance it should be applied with a degree of flexibility and with regard to the individual circumstances of the case, in particular the sites local context. As a consequence, and given my findings on these issues, any conflict with the SPD would be limited and not sufficient to justify the refusal of planning permission.
11. Accordingly, I find that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the host property and the ACA as a whole and would thus be in accord with policies LP10 and LP12 of the GLP, the guidance within the Design SPD and the corresponding policies of the Framework.

Highway safety

12. The submitted plans show that the proposed dormer would allow an additional bedroom and ensuite to be accommodated within the converted roof space. The Council contend that there would be insufficient parking on site to serve this additional accommodation and that it would, therefore, have a detrimental impact on highway safety.
13. With regard to the Council's Parking Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2014) (Parking SPD) my attention has not been drawn to any specific reference within this guidance to the requirement for additional parking to be provided where the development involves, as in this case, an extension to an existing property. The Parking SPD appears to largely concentrate on the level of parking provision required to serve new dwellings.
14. Even so, there is no substantive evidence before me to indicate that the proposed extension would generate any requirement for additional parking provision or that the failure to do so would lead to any harmful impact on highway safety or any inconvenience to other highway users. The Delegated Report indicates that no objections were raised by interested parties in relation to the lack of parking provision and there is also no suggestion in the Report that the Highway Authority had any concerns in this respect.
15. As I observed on my visit, parking for this small terrace of properties, which includes the appeal site, is largely provided on street. During my site visit, there was no indication that the area suffered from any parking stress or that there were any restrictions on the use of on street parking. Similarly, no evidence has been submitted to indicate that the demand for on street parking results in any harm to highway safety.

16. Moreover, as I observed, the appeal site is located within a highly sustainable location with easy access, on foot or by bicycle, to day to day facilities and services within the local centre to the north, as well as easy access to nearby bus stops. Where these circumstances exist, the Parking SPD states that they may be sufficient to set aside any parking requirements.
17. For the above reasons, I find that the appeal proposal would not lead to any harmful impact on highway safety and would thus accord with the requirements of policy LP23 of the GLP, the relevant guidance within the Parking SPD and the corresponding policies of the Framework.

Conditions

18. The Council has suggested various conditions which I have considered against the advice in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance chapter on the use of planning conditions. Conditions requiring compliance with the submitted plans and for materials to match existing are necessary and reasonable in order to reflect the details included within the application.

Conclusions

19. For the reasons given above and having taken all other matters into account, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR