

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 April 2022

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13TH May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C4235/D/22/3294140

80 Swann Lane, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle SK8 7HU

- 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 Graeme Kay against the decision of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/083031, dated 3 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is a dormer loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a dormer loft conversion at 80 Swann Lane, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/083031, dated 3 October 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: SP(00)001, 002 & 003, PL(20)001 & 002, EL(00)001, 002 & 003.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Reasons

3. The property lies within the Hulme Hall Road / Swann Lane / Hill Top Avenue Conservation Area. The conservation officer describes that the area's character is that of a rural suburb with a range of diverse yet harmonious styles of housing dating from different periods since the 16th century, all set in surroundings characterised by spacious streets and gardens with mature tree canopies. This gives a leafy quality to streets and creates visual consistency between different building phases featuring a variety of architectural materials and styles. I agree with this analysis and also accept that the property makes a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the
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- conservation area as a good example of a semi-detached house of high quality design.
4. The proposal would result in a relatively modest flat roofed dormer window within the roof slope of the two storey rear outrigger. It would face the outrigger of the neighbouring property which has a smaller pitched roof dormer within the corresponding roof slope. Permission has previously been granted for a similar dormer at the appeal property. Although the Council's statement suggests that the alterations would be very visible and prominent in views through and across the conservation area, I found no public vantage points where this particular roof slope is visible within the conservation area. The Council have provided no evidence of such views.
 5. The dormer would be visible from the rear garden of the adjacent house; and potentially from a very limited number of properties to the rear on Ravenoak Park Road although I found no views of the roof between those properties. In any event, even if such views are available in winter or are available from back gardens of the very small number of properties that may have a direct line of sight, this modest addition would be viewed against the higher backdrop of the main roof. For the most part, only the cheek of the dormer would be discernible. The perceived differences between the dormer on the neighbouring roof, the approved dormer for this roof and the currently proposed dormer, in these views, would be extremely limited.
 6. The lack of wider visibility, together with the limited size of the proposed dormer, which would be set relatively centrally within the lower roof form of the outrigger, would ensure that it would not have any perceptible impact on the wider appearance of the conservation area. Wider visibility does not however justify poor design as detailing that is unacceptable can erode the important characteristics of an area and should not be accepted in any event. However, this addition would be of a modest size and simple form that would sit relatively comfortably within the lower roof of this property. These properties were not designed with dormer additions and in that respect, neither this nor the approved designs are characteristic of the original houses. The dormer in the neighbouring property is visible from Ravenoak Road and its pitched roof can be viewed in association with the rear facing pitched gables of these properties. I consider that design to be a suitable response in those particular circumstances.
 7. The circumstances differ with regard to the appeal property as the proposal would have no wider impact. I am satisfied that it would have a neutral impact on both the character and appearance of the conservation area. Its design, given its limited size and central position in a roof slope, screened from wider views, would also be acceptable in these particular circumstances and would not detract from the important design characteristics of the existing house.
 8. The proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. As there would be no harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area, no public benefits are required to justify it. I am satisfied that it would not conflict with the design or heritage policies of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review 2006, particularly policies CDH1.8 and HC1.3; or Core Strategy DPD 2011 policies SIE-1 and SIE-3. As the policies referred to by the Council generally accord with both the design and heritage

requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, I afford them full weight.

9. The Council's Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (SPD) advises that dormers should form part of the roof instead of dominating the roof scene. Given my findings, I am satisfied that the size and materials of the dormer would not be at odds with this guidance. The main conflict relates to the lack of a pitched roof with the SPD stating that a flat roof dormer, added to a pitched roof, looks out of place. Given the particular circumstances of this proposal, being a modest addition to a rear outrigger, which does not appear to be anticipated by the guidance; and given that I have already concluded that it would not be out of keeping with the dwelling and would not be prominent or generally more widely visible, I do not consider that the proposal would be at odds with the overarching objectives of the guidance. I find that the very limited divergence from the advice with regard to the pitched roof needs to be considered alongside the overall requirements of the SPD and should not weigh significantly against the proposal in these particular circumstances.
10. Reference has been made to other appeals associated with rear dormer windows at 102 Cheadle Old Road and 51 Elms Road. I do not have the full details of these cases. It is apparent from both decision letters that the rear roofscapes were subject to clear views by a range of residents in surrounding properties. It would also appear that the characteristics of either the host property or the structures proposed, differed from the circumstances now being considered. Furthermore, this is a case where dormer additions have already been accepted. I do not have sufficient evidence to draw meaningful comparisons but I must in any event, consider this proposal on its own merits.
11. In conclusion, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and would not result in harm to it. The scale and design of the proposed structure would not dominate this particularly well screened side facing roof and would be of a suitable design given the particular circumstances of this case. As there are no matters that weigh significantly against the proposal, I allow the appeal.
12. I have imposed conditions relating to the commencement of development and the details of the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. The plans set out the details of the materials to be used and therefore a condition to require these details is not necessary.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR