



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 May 2022

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/W/21/3285170

12 Heathlands Close, Chandler's Ford SO53 1GY

- 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 Elton Field against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
 - The application Ref H/21/90667, dated 20 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is new front facing dormer to existing loft conversion. Garage conversion with new pitched roof to replace flat roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since the refusal of the planning application and the submission of this appeal, the *Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036* (the Local Plan) was adopted on 25 April 2022. This replaces all of the saved policies of the adopted *Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review 2001-2011* (the LPR), and it comprises the relevant development plan for the purposes of the determination of this appeal.
3. I have dealt with the appeal accordingly, and I attach full weight to Local Plan Policy DM1, which is referred to in the Council's statement of case, and which has replaced Saved Policy 59.BE of the LPR as the relevant policy in respect of the Council's first reason for refusal.
4. Since the refusal of the planning application and the submission of the appeal, the Council has confirmed that it no longer wishes to pursue the second reason for refusal in respect of a deficiency in off-street parking. It has clarified that, contrary to the wording of this reason for refusal, the proposal would not result in the loss of existing on-site parking, since the existing garage is not of sufficient size to count towards on-site parking provision. Also, the proposal would not generate a need for any additional parking, since the house would remain as a 4-bedroomed dwelling.
5. On the basis of the evidence before me, I have no reason to disagree with the Council in this respect, and I have dealt with the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

6. Having regard to the above, the sole main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal property comprises a semi-detached, pitched roof two-storey dwelling, located on the southern side of Heathlands Close, within an established open plan suburban residential area. It forms one of an identical pair of traditionally designed houses. This form of development is characteristic of Heathlands Close, a tributary road leading off Heathlands Road, which has a distinctively uniform pattern of built development.
8. The cul-de-sac comprises a series of similarly designed pairs of semi-detached houses. Those on the straight part of the close are positioned on a regular linear front building line and have single storey garages to their sides. The properties around the head of the cul-de-sac have a slightly more varied front building line and were built with integral garages. However, they also present a cohesive form of built development to the street frontage.
9. Throughout the close, the street scene is characterised by modest traditionally designed pairs of houses, with spacing to each side. There are elements of individuality, for example having regard to external finishes and the conversion of integral garages into living accommodation. However, notwithstanding this, the houses exhibit a strong overall consistency of design, including simple, pitched tiled roofs, often incorporating chimney features, over mainly brick walls. The houses are similarly orientated towards the street, having side-facing gables.
10. There is a strong sense of symmetry to each pair of properties in respect of roof form, front fenestration design and alignment and original garage positioning. Front dormer windows are not a feature of the close, and the uncluttered and uniform nature of the street-facing roofscape makes a positive contribution to the street scene.
11. As such, there is a strong, regular rhythm of building design within Heathlands Close. Due to the open plan nature of the properties, this is readily apparent within views from the public realm, both when looking towards each side of the road individually, and also in views incorporating both sides of the road, when approaching from Heathlands Road. This consistency of modestly designed, two-storey dwellings, with unaltered front-facing roof slopes of a similar ridge height and roof orientation towards the road, makes a positive contribution to the street scene and the character and appearance of the area.
12. The proposed front dormer would be out of keeping with the above pattern of development that characterises the cul-de-sac, and it would disrupt the established regularity of building design. The flat-roofed box dormer would occupy a considerable amount of the front roof slope, extending close to the roof ridge and eaves and occupying a large part of the roof width. As such, it would dominate the front part of the roof, due to its combined scale, mass, width and height. The large amount of blank wall around the dormer glazing would add to its visually apparent bulk. Moreover, its flat-roofed design would not respect the traditional pitched roof construction of the original property.
13. As such, the proposed dormer would appear as a bulky, top-heavy and discordant addition to the front roof slope. It would be visually apparent in views of the property from the street, and would draw the eye, appearing at odds with the prevailing consistent roofscape which is characteristic of the street. It would detract from the appearance of the property when viewed

within the context of the streetscape, harmfully eroding the established pattern of built development along both sides of the road to the detriment of the visual amenities of the street scene.

14. The incongruous nature of the front dormer would be exacerbated by the proposed non-alignment of the glazed element of the structure in relation to the ground and first floor windows below. This would be compounded by the proposed more vertical window proportions in comparison to the strongly horizontal design emphasis of the existing front elevation windows on the appeal property and its immediate neighbour.
15. The resulting discordant appearance in relation to the adjacent semi-detached property would noticeably unbalance the existing visual harmony arising from the symmetry of the two dwellings. This would have a materially harmful impact on the appearance of the building as a whole, and it would be out of keeping with the pairs of similarly designed semi-detached properties which comprise a positive element of the street scene.
16. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of existing flat roofed dormers nearby in Heathlands Road. These are located outside Heathlands Close, where there is less consistency of property design, and they relate to a row of purpose-built chalet bungalows, which are not exactly comparable with the appeal property design or the prevailing street scene within which it is located. As such, in this instance, the existence of other flat-roofed dormers within the wider residential development does not justify the harm that I have found.
17. Moreover, I must determine the appeal proposal on its individual planning merits, and within the context of the character and appearance of the existing building and the immediate locality within which it is sited.
18. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the appeal scheme would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would be contrary to Local Plan Policy DM1. This policy, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that new development is well-designed and does not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible should enhance, the character and appearance of urban areas.
19. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to policies of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2021) which seek to achieve well designed places as set out in Chapter 12.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Leonard

INSPECTOR