The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2022

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/22/3299311
51 Glenwood Avenue, Eastwood, LEIGH-ON-SEA, SS9 5EA

- 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 Lee Douglas against the decision of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
- The application Ref. 22/00157/FULH, dated 31 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2022.
- The development proposed is single storey front/side infill extension and hip to gable loft conversion with rear & front dormers.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property, the semi-detached pair of which it forms part and the wider street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached single-storey dwelling in a mixed street scene of dwellings which vary in terms of design, form and scale. Gaps between buildings vary, but tend to be more effective in creating a sense of space between the single-storey properties. For example, many retain driveway gaps to side boundaries, or have shallow-roofed garages occupying the side space.

5. Policy DM3 of the Council's Development Management Document (DMD)[1] expects building additions to make a positive contribution to the character of

[1] Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Local Planning Framework Development Management Document 2015

the original building and to adopt a scale that is respectful and subservient to it, and to the surrounding area. This corresponds with DMD Policy DM1, which additionally advises that to reinforce local distinctiveness, development should add to the overall quality of the area and respect the character of the site, its local context and surroundings in terms including architectural approach, size, scale, form, massing, and proportions. Despite their different side projections, the semi-detached pair of which the appeal property forms half retain a degree of symmetry through the prominence of the original main section of the dwellings, and together appear integrated in the street scene.

6. In contrast, the combination of the infill extension, the hip-to-gable roof extension and adding dormer windows would overwhelm the original form and scale of the dwelling, appearing neither respectful nor subservient. The raising of the height of the side element to match the main ridge would visually extend the width of the dwelling. In so doing, it would diminish the symmetry of the semi-detached dwellings, and would detract from the street scene.

7. Whilst I note the appellant's view, I do not share the assessment that the extensions would be modest in size and scale, nor that they would respect the proportions of the existing bungalow. The front dormers would appear disproportionately large and 'top heavy' on the part of the roof in which they would be set. Given their size, including the margins around the windows, they could not be regarded as 'incidental', as required by the Design and Townscape Guide[2] (DTG). I accept that the offset position of the ground floor openings would make it difficult to achieve vertical alignment, but the size of the dormers makes integration harder to achieve.

8. The appellant has identified other dwellings in the vicinity with more than one front dormer, but these tend to be on detached properties. I do not consider that local examples of single dormers on semi-detached premises have generally created the perception of multiple dormers on a single building, and therefore the character of the street scene does not support the proposal.

9. The existing side element of the appeal property is built reasonably close to the side boundary, and the proposed increase in height and mass of the building in this proximity would materially reduce the sense of space that is found in this stretch of dwellings, and which create the context for the appeal property. I note that the garage to No.53 is built up to the shared boundary, but as this element is lower than the dwelling which it serves it contributes to the sense of space between buildings.

10. The appellant has drawn attention to the potential to create a hip-to-gable roof extension as Permitted Development, and intends to exercise such rights should the appeal fail. This type of roof alteration is found elsewhere in the vicinity, and whilst it would alter the symmetry of the semi-detached pair it would not be an uncommon feature in the street scene. However, it is the cumulative effect of the scale of development facilitated by the proposed hip-to-gable extension and its proximity to the boundary which would detract in this case. I have not been provided with details of the original building, and as such I cannot determine the extent to which the building could be altered as Permitted Development. Nevertheless, any 'fallback position' is likely to be far less imposing in its impact on the building and the street scene, and as such it does not warrant acceptance of the appeal proposal.

[2] Supplementary Planning Document 1, Design and Townscape Guide 2009

11. The visual impact of the proposed rear dormer window on the street scene would be reasonably limited. As such, the primary impact of the appeal development would arise from the infill extension, roof extension and front dormer windows, although the rear dormer would add to the overall increase in the bulk of the dwelling.

12. I appreciate that public consultation on the proposal did not result in any objections, but that is only one factor to be taken into account in the assessment of the proposal.

13. I therefore conclude that as a result of its increased scale and design the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, the semi-detached pair of which it forms part and the wider street scene. It would conflict with the overarching design aims set out in Core Strategy[3] Policies KP2 and CP4, DMD Policies DM1 and DM3, and advice in the DTG, which requires proposals for additional roof accommodation to respect the style, scale and form of the existing roof design. For the same reasons it would conflict with the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, to create development that is visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR

[3] Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document One, 2007