



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 September 2022

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/22/3295029

21 Astley, Grays RM17 6UY

- 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 Chineze Okonkwo-Onyilo against the decision of Thurrock Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02152/HHA, dated 19 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is described a loft conversion with rear dormer and front Velux windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the development from the application form contains elements such as the installation of roof lights and the conversion of a loft. Based on the information before me, the conversion of a loft in principle does not require planning consent, and the roof lights have not been objected to by the Council. As the reason for refusal only focuses upon the construction of a rear dormer window, this appeal will only focus upon this element.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed rear dormer window upon the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located along Astley, one of a number of cul-de-sacs leading from the main spine road of Argent Street which appears to be a large residential development on land between the railway and the Thames, which appears to have been constructed in the late twentieth/ early twenty-first century. As the area appears to have been developed in phases by a single developer, there is a symmetry in design and form, with larger apartment blocks along the Thames and Argent Street, with smaller cul-de-sacs which contain detached and semi-detached dwellings. The detached and semi-detached dwellings have a simple and functional design and are typically two stories, constructed of mixed red and brown stock bricks, brown concrete tiled roofs, with many of the dwellings having feature front projecting gabled bay or curved roof bay windows which are constructed from timber cladding or render. It would appear that many of the dwellings had timber windows, which over time have unfortunately been replaced with uPVC. Despite this, as the dwellings are relatively recent, there is a lack of alterations or extensions in the

area with the roof forms in the immediate vicinity retaining their original form and appearance. The roof planes along this section of Astley are uncluttered and authentic to their architectural integrity with unaltered roof planes being the dominant characteristic of the street scene.

5. The appeal site displays a number of positive qualities which are experienced within the locality, being one of the characteristic semi-detached dwellings of the estate with a two storey front projection. The placement of the dwelling is unusual in this respect as the rear of the dwelling is also visible from the public realm as it backs onto the cul-de-sac which leads to the car parking area of the apartments along the Thames.
6. In undertaking roof extensions to existing buildings, the Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (CSPMD) Policy PMD2 and Policy CSTP22 are design led policies which have a number of design criteria to adhere to such as being high quality, renewable and low emission technology, respond positively to the character of the area, promote continuity, amongst others. The Thurrock Design Guide Residential Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) supports the design policies of the CSPMD and provides further guidance on residential extensions, their design and placement.
7. The proposed dormer roof extension would be erected to the rear of the main building and would be set back from the edges of the roof and contain two joined gables. I note text within the SPD that suggests that in planning rear dormer extensions, that they may be unacceptable regardless of design, and that it is important to assess whether dormer roof extensions are part of the character of the locality, particularly when the dormer extensions would face the public realm. Whilst the dormer would appear to meet the set backs from the roof, the design of the dormer window is overcomplicated and accentuates its visual mass and appearance on the roof plane. This together with dormer windows being uncharacteristic within this particular area of Astley further convince me that such an extension would be inappropriate and be incongruous within this area.
8. I note the applicant's Statement of Case which states that No.1 Argent Street which is nearby has a similar dormer that was approved in 2017. The Council state that since that decision, the policy position has changed with the introduction of the new version of the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as the SPD. Having viewed this extension at 1 Argent Street, I am not of the view that this extension sets a precedent or that this extension contributes positively to the character, appearance or local distinctiveness of the area. As such the presence of such an extension does not justify the acceptability of this proposed scheme.
9. Consequently and in conclusion of this matter, the proposed dormer window would be overcomplicated in design and would be uncharacteristic to the existing building and locality. The proposal would therefore be contrary to CSPMD Policy PMD2 and Policy CSTP22 which is supported by the SPD, as described previously.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers
INSPECTOR