



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 February 2023

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1775/D/22/3307962
139 Second Avenue, Portsmouth, PO6 1JT

- 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 Daniel Hawkes against the decision of Portsmouth City Council.
 - The application Ref. 22/00410/PLAREG, dated 14 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 July 2022.
 - The development is retrospective application for construction of dormer to front roofslope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have adopted the description of development as set out in the decision notice as this more accurately describes the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located on the northern side of Second Avenue and comprises a semi-detached bungalow with accommodation in the roof (loft). The latter was, I understand, formed with the benefit of a rear dormer extension. A front dormer extension has since been constructed to provide an additional bedroom within the loft. As it has already been built, the appeal seeks retrospective planning permission for its retention.
5. The other half of the semi to the host property is 141 Second Avenue (No.141), which is a similar bungalow with loft accommodation that appears to have been secured through a rear dormer extension, with only two small Velux windows within the front roofslope which is otherwise intact.
6. The surrounding area comprises a mixture of single storey bungalows, chalet style bungalows and two storey properties, mostly semi-detached, albeit a number of detached properties are also present. Some of the properties are constructed from brick, others have painted brickwork or render or cladding. Whilst some properties have been altered, the level of change, specifically on

their frontage and to the streetscene, is modest and in most cases has been undertaken sympathetically.

7. The proposal comprises a flat roofed dormer that has been constructed on the front elevation to the host property. The proposed dormer occupies the majority of the front roofslope, sitting marginally below the main ridge and above the eaves, and with a marginal set back from the sides of the original pitched roof. The new dormer has a light grey weatherboard finish to match, I understand, the materials on the rear dormer.
8. Within the above context, I agree with the Council that due to its scale, height, width and location, the proposed dormer is excessive and overly dominant within the existing roofscape to the host property and wider streetscene. The proposal results in a discordant feature that overwhelms the original roof to the host property. This impact is accentuated by the mis match of materials and the fact that the roofscape to the other half of this semi, No.141, is intact.
9. The proposed dormer is neither subservient nor proportional to the original front elevation of the host property or its neighbour, No.141. The proposal also harms the symmetry created by this pair of semis and introduces a design feature that is out of scale and out of keeping with the host and its surrounds. Overall, the proposed dormer does not sit comfortably on the host property and results in a development that is visually prominent and harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.
10. Reference has been made to examples of existing dormer windows and other roof alterations elsewhere in the area. Some of the examples referred to relate to properties where the dormers appear to be an intrinsic part of the original design, such as the chalet style semis to the west of the appeal site or the modern property on the corner of Second Avenue and St Andrew's Road. These and other examples are also of dormers that are smaller in scale to the appeal proposal and are thus subservient to their hosts, and also proportional in that they occupy only a small part of the front roofslope to the properties in question. Consequently, these examples are not, in my view, comparable to the proposed dormer and their existence does not affect the findings I have reached on this issue.
11. Within the statement submitted by the owners of No.141 in support of the appeal is a suggestion that the Appellant proceeded to construct the dormer following discussions with the Council which led them to believe that the proposal constituted permitted development. However, I can only consider the proposal that is before me, which is an appeal submitted under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 seeking retrospective permission for the retention of the dormer. Any queries or concerns that the Appellant has over the advice provided at the pre-application stage are matters that they would need to be take up directly with the Council.
12. The statement from No.141 also refers to the proposals compliance with the relevant Building Regulations. That may be so, but it does not negate the need for the proposal to be assessed in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area, an assessment that requires the decision maker to apply their planning judgement having regard to the prevailing development plan policies, the local context and the individual circumstances of the case.

13. Whilst I also sympathise with the personal circumstances of the Appellant in seeking additional accommodation to support their large family and also acknowledge the benefit of the improvements resulting from the refurbishment of the host property, these considerations, either individually or cumulatively, are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. I also accept that change can be important and should be supported where it allows properties to be adapted to meet owners requirements or to reflect how we live today. However, the change that has occurred from the construction of the proposed dormer has, for the reasons given above, resulted in significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and wider streetscene.
14. Accordingly, I find that the proposed dormer would be contrary to policy PCS23 of The Portsmouth Plan (Portsmouth Core Strategy) (January 2012) and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021). Both seek, amongst other requirements, to ensure that new development is well designed, visually attractive as a result of good architecture, is sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment and is appropriate in terms of its scale, appearance and materials.

Conclusion

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

G Roberts

INSPECTOR