



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2023

by R Gee BA (Hons) Dip TP PGCert UD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/22/3300807

3 Vicarage Drive, London SW14 8RX

- 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 and Mrs John and Karen Heaton against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 22/1020/HOT, dated 5 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as "Extending existing rear dormer to reorient it to natural light; adding windows to the first floor on the south elevation as it is currently solid and blocks natural light and sunlight; adding bay window to ground floor of south elevation to match adjacent existing bay on same elevation in order to gain access to south light to reduce reliance on artificial light/energy use".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs John and Karen Heaton against the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The effect on the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the streetscene.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is a two-storey detached house on a corner plot of a residential cul-de-sac. The property has a dual aspect and is highly visible from the road and properties within the cul-de-sac.
5. From my site visit I noted that there is some variety in the style and design of dwellings, including their roofs, along Vicarage Drive and there are a number of properties in the locality which have roof extensions and alterations.
6. The design of the proposed rear dormer would reflect contemporary design principles. It would be set down slightly from the ridge line and would not extend fully to the side of the property. However, it would occupy nearly all the rear roof slope and would dominate and unbalance the rear elevation such that it would be an unsympathetic and incongruous feature to the existing dwelling.

As such the development would be contrary to the House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2015 (SPD) which states that roof extensions should be in scale with the existing structure and not dominate the original roof.

7. Whilst the existing boundary landscaping does provide some screening of the property, owing to its corner location the proposed dormer would be readily visible in public views.
8. It is noted that the materials of the proposed construction would provide some contrast to the existing dwelling and ensure it would appear as a modern extension. However, this would not overcome the concerns identified in respect of bulk, mass and scale.
9. I appreciate that the roof of other dwellings in the area have been altered to include dormer windows, with my attention drawn particularly to 2 Vicarage Drive and 20 Vicarage Road, which are both in close proximity to the site. These dormers tend to be constructed in traditional materials that reflect those used in the original roof which reduces their prominence. Whilst some of these alterations are substantial and appear prominent in the streetscene, I am not aware of the circumstances of their construction. In any event, I must consider the appeal scheme on its own merits. The existence of other prominent roof extensions in the locality does not justify the harm I have identified, neither does the lack of objection from neighbours.
10. On this matter, I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the streetscene. The development would conflict with Policy LP1 of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames Local Plan July 2018 (LP) which seeks to ensure compatibility with local character including scale, height, mass, form, materials and detailing, the SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to ensure developments will add to the overall quality of the area.

Other Matters

11. I note the benefit of providing additional living space benefitting from natural daylight and sunlight to the occupants and seeking to meet environmental targets. However, this is not an uncommon scenario and, whilst I have sympathy to the circumstances described, they are not sufficient to outweigh the harm and policy conflict identified.
12. The appellant refers having permission to build a larger dormer via permitted development, presumably under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. Limited information, such as details of the appearance, have been provided relating to this. Consequently, this does not outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.
13. The proposal includes other minor works including alterations to the first-floor windows and ground floor bay window. The Council has not raised objection to these elements, and I have no reason to disagree with their findings.
14. I note reference has been made to the time taken to determine the application, however, this is not relevant to the planning merits of the proposal.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, having had regard to the development plan as a whole, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Gee

INSPECTOR