



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2023

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/22/3309077

565 Woodgrange Drive, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, SS1 3EJ

- 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 John Cooper against the decision of Southend-on-Sea City Council.
 - The application Ref. 22/01412/FULH, dated 8 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 31 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is part pitch part flat roof rear single storey extension. Raise ridge height and construct flat roof rear extension to form habitable roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for part pitch part flat roof rear single storey extension. Raise ridge height and construct flat roof rear extension to form habitable roof space at 565 Woodgrange Drive, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, SS1 3EJ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 22/01412/FULH, dated 8 July 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: DRG No. 0106 1 of 2; and DRG No. 0106 2 of 2.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The second floor flank windows shown on the approved plan shall be glazed in obscure glass (the glass to be obscure to at least Level 4 on the Pilkington Levels of Privacy or equivalent standard) and fixed shut, except for any top hung fan light which shall be a minimum of 1.7 metres above the internal floor level of the room in which it is installed. In the case of multiple or double glazed units at least one layer of glass in the relevant units shall be glazed in obscure glass to at least Level 4 and shall be retained as such thereafter.
 - 5) All flood risk management measures identified in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment shall be installed prior to the occupation or first use of the development hereby permitted and shall thereafter be retained.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but as the parties have not provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed 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 and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located in a mixed residential streetscene with a range of dwelling designs, including single-storey properties, two-storey houses, and flat-roofed apartment blocks. Within this context, the dwelling is one of a group of similarly scaled houses but which vary as a result of extensions. There is no consistent roof ridge height, and nearby there are examples of two-storey properties with dormer windows and rooms in the roofspace.
5. The Council raises no objection to the reorientation of the roof of the dwelling and the increase in ridge height. Given the existing roofscape, I share the Council's assessment that these elements of the proposal would be acceptable in relation to neighbouring properties. Moreover, I find no issue with the proposed single-storey rear extension and remodelling of the existing. The Council's concerns focus on the proposed rear dormer window, considering it to be a large, flat-roofed addition that would dominate the rear roof and give a top-heavy appearance to the house.
6. Policy DM1 of the Council's Development Management Document 2015¹ (DMD) requires all developments to add to the overall quality of the area and to respect the character of the site, its local context and surroundings in matters including architectural approach, height, size, scale, form and massing. In support of the Council's policies, the published Design and Townscape Guide² (DTG) advises that dormer windows should appear incidental in the roof slope, being set in from side walls, set well below the ridgeline and well above the eaves. It also advises that large box style dormers should be avoided, especially where they have public impact.
7. The guidance does not specify any minimum space standards, and although the proposed dormer window would be large it would appear proportionate to the roofslope within which it would be set. It would be surrounded by reasonable spacing to either side, above the eaves and below the roof ridge. Given the width of the existing windows at the appeal property and the space around the proposed dormer, I am not persuaded that it would create a top-heavy or unbalanced appearance to the dwelling. I appreciate that an elevated railway line passes the rear of the appeal site, giving clear views of the proposal. However, views of the development would be fleeting, and in any event I do not consider that its scale and design would detract from the character and appearance of the dwelling.

¹ Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Local development Framework Development Management Document 2015

² Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Supplementary Planning Document 1 Design and Townscape Guide 2009

8. Dormer windows are not prevalent in the immediate vicinity, but the appellant has drawn attention to some examples. These suggest a degree of flexibility in the application of the DTG, and have taken place without any obvious detriment to the character and appearance of the area. In particular, flat-roofed dormers constructed at 532 Woodgrange Drive may be separate roof additions, but this is not perceived from the street in front of the property; their window arrangement appears to be as integrated with the host house as proposed in this case.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be acceptable in its effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the wider area. It would accord with Southend Core Strategy 2007 Policies KP2 and CP4, to create a high quality urban environment; with DMD Policies DM1 and DM3, which expects building additions to adopt a scale that is respectful and subservient to that of the original building and surrounding area, and with the DTG.
10. For the same reasons, the proposal would accord with the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

Other Matters

11. A letter from a resident included concerns about loss of privacy arising from third floor development. However, the rear- and front-facing openings would cause no greater potential for overlooking than existing first-floor windows in the building. Restricted glazing to secondary side-facing windows could be secured by condition, and subject to this I share the Council's assessment that the design, size, siting and scale of the development would not result in any significant harm to the amenities of the site, neighbouring occupiers or the wider area.

Conditions

12. In addition to the standard time limit, I have attached a condition specifying the approved drawings as this provides certainty. It is also appropriate to control materials to match the existing dwelling, in order to safeguard the character and appearance of the development and the area.
13. I have attached a condition to secure and retain obscure glazing to the secondary side-facing windows, in the interests of preserving the privacy of neighbouring residents.
14. The site is within an area at risk of flooding and a flood risk assessment (FRA) was submitted with the application. Although the Lead Local Flood authority suggested a number of conditions, given the scale and nature of the proposal and the Environment Agency standing advice to which the Council refers, I consider it sufficient to require compliance with the submitted FRA.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR