



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2023

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N1160/D/23/3316277

85 Dunraven Drive, Plymouth, PL6 6AT

- 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 & Mrs Healey against the decision of Plymouth City Council.
 - The application Ref. 22/01648/FUL, dated 30 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is 2no. front dormers.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for 2no. front dormers at 85 Dunraven Drive, Plymouth, PL6 6AT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 22/01648/FUL, dated 30 September 2022 and the plans submitted with it, and subject to the conditions listed below.
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 2) 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 and otherwise be as shown on the Application Form.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: 1030-03 (received 30/09/2022).

Procedural Matter

2. I have adopted the description of development as set out in the decision notice as this is more precise.
3. The application was submitted in response to a previous proposal for a flat roofed box dormer that was dismissed on appeal on 28 July 2022. That proposal involved a single dormer that took up the majority of the front roof plane (ref. APP/N1160/D/22/3298233) (2022 Appeal). I have had regard to that decision in determining this appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. Policy DEV20 of the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint local Plan 2014 – 2034 (March 2019) (JLP), referred to in the Council's reason for refusal, seeks, amongst other requirements, to ensure that development secures a good standard of design that has regard to the pattern of development and local context in terms of siting, layout, scale, height and materials. A broadly similar approach is set out in paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (Framework) but the latter also states that being sympathetic to local character should not prevent or discourage appropriate innovation or change. Paragraph 44 of the National Design Guide (NDG) (January 2021) also states that well designed places do not need to copy their surroundings and that it is appropriate for new development to include innovation and change to reflect how we live today.
6. The Council's reason for refusal also refers to The Plymouth & South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document (July 2020) (SPD). I have only been provided with one page from this document headed 'Dormer windows' which advises that: new dormers will be considered in terms of their impact on the host and the streetscene; they should not dominate a building; they should be proportionate to the existing roof and windows below; and are only acceptable on the front elevation where this is a feature of nearby properties and they are sensitively designed and located.
7. The appeal proposal involves the construction of two dormers on the front elevation to the main roof of the host property. Both dormers would include a pitched roof, with windows and tiles to match existing.
8. The appeal site is located on the southern side of Dunraven Road and comprises a two storey detached property with its frontage given over to parking and landscaping. The surrounding properties, on the same side of the road, are largely similar two storey detached properties. Whilst there are rows of properties with similar designs, the road also contains properties that vary in terms of their scale, style, age, roof forms, layout and materials. A number of properties have been extended or altered, there are examples of modern infill or redevelopment and there are also examples of front facing dormer windows.
9. Within the above context, the proposed dormer windows would be: sited within the front roof plane located just below or in line with the main ridge; sited well above the existing eaves; set well back from the edges (flanks) to the main roof; broadly aligned with the windows below; and include a pitched roof with windows and tiling to match existing. As such, the proposed dormers would not appear out of keeping with the host property or with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, where, as I confirmed, there are examples of existing dormer windows of differing designs and scale, several of which comprise large flat roofed box dormers.
10. I accept that the proposed dormers would result in a change to the appearance of the host property. However, I disagree with the Council and consider that the new dormers would be proportionate and subservient to the host, that they would not dominate its front facade and would not result in an incongruous form of development. Compared to the flat roofed box design dismissed in the 2022 Appeal, a large part of the existing roof plane would be retained and the new dormers would sit comfortably on the front roof plane. Although the new dormers would not be symmetrical in terms of their size and scale, the

difference between the two, in this respect, is modest and this factor alone would not result in any significant harm to the host or to the character and appearance of the area.

11. Whilst there would be some conflict with the guidance in the SPD and with the findings made by the Inspector in the 2022 Appeal, due to the fact that the proposed dormers would not be set well below the existing main ridge to the host, that conflict is, in my judgement, minor. In all other respects the appeal proposal would accord with the SPD guidance and would also address the main concerns raised by the Inspector in the 2022 Appeal.
12. Furthermore, it is not uncommon to find the ridge of new dormers aligned with the main ridge of the existing property, reflecting, in some cases, the design and pitch of the existing roof and the desire to provide adequate headroom for the new accommodation being created, and in doing so making effective and full use of the land and property in question. As the Appellant has also pointed out an example of approved roof dormers extending up to the ridge can be seen on the modern development built on the site adjacent to 22 Dunraven Drive. For all the above reasons, the conflict with the SPD guidance would be limited and would not be sufficient in itself to justify the refusal of planning permission.
13. Accordingly, I find that the appeal proposal would comply with policy DEV20 of the JLP and with the overall aims and objectives of the dormer window guidance within the SPD, and would also comply with the corresponding policies of the Framework and NDG.

Conditions

14. The Council has suggested various conditions which I have considered against the advice in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance chapter on the use of planning conditions. A condition requiring compliance with the submitted plan and for materials to match existing or otherwise be as shown on the Application Form, are necessary and reasonable to secure a high-quality development. I have, however, added reference to the approved plan for clarity.

Conclusion

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

G Roberts

INSPECTOR