



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 April 2023

By Terrence Kemmann-Lane JP DipTP FRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V1505/D/23/3314725

26 West Beech Avenue, Wickford, SS11 8AL

- 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 Miss Helen Popple against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01553/FUL, dated 29 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is a hip to gable roof extension, and front and rear dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Preliminary matters

2. The application form described the proposed development as "Bungalow loft conversion with new gable end and front and rear dormer with repositioned front door". The council amended this to the description that I have used in the headings above: I consider that this better describes the development proposed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed hip to gable and the front dormer on the character and appearance of the dwelling, its neighbour, and the streetscene.

Reasons

4. The existing dwelling is a 2-bedroom semi-detached bungalow with a hipped roof and gable front projection. Its attached neighbour, No.24, shares the same footprint and roof form, being a mirror image of No.26. The appeal property is situated within a long-established residential area of houses and bungalows, some detached and some semi-detached. There is a wide range of styles in the area, particularly in respect of roof form, although hipped roofs are a common characteristic. There are examples of front dormers of various designs, some of which are more successful in marrying well with the original design of the host dwelling.
5. Starting with the policies of the development plan, the council adopted the "Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies" in September 2007. The relevant policy in this case is policy BAS BE12 (Development Control), which includes the statement "*Planning permission for new residential development, and for*

the alteration and extension of existing dwellings, will be refused if it causes material harm in any of the following ways: - (i) harm to the character of the surrounding area, including the street scene;". This policy is supplemented by guidance in the Essex Design Guide. This policy and the guidance conform with the latest version of government policies in the National Planning Policies Framework (the Framework) that place importance on the need for high quality design in new development, and that poor design should be refused.

6. As I have already noted, there are a number of dormer windows in the front roof slopes within the locality, exhibiting a variety of forms. The council suggests that many of these are historic and are likely to have utilised the permitted development rights at that time, and that appears to be the case to me. The Framework puts considerable emphasis on good design and the need to improve design standards. I therefore place little weight on existing examples where control has either been non-existent or has been exercised without the rigour now expected.
7. The appeal dwelling and its neighbour, like a number of others in the immediate vicinity, have retained a fine simple exterior to the street that is symmetrical and pleasing, providing a satisfactory composition. The desirability of the proposed development from the point of view of the personal interests of the appellant and her family can be readily understood, but it is the contribution to the public realm of the existing bungalow and its neighbour that is overriding. The unilateral change to the roof by the change from hip to gable, and insertion of the dormer window, are both unbalancing elements which would detract from the character and appearance of this semi-detached pair and on the streetscene. At my site visit I looked at the examples that are referred to in the appellants case, but they do not lead me to a different conclusion.
8. As for the rear box dormer, the appellant reports that the planning officer confirmed that, by itself, it would be permitted development. I have no reason to believe that the officer's calculations are incorrect, and therefore this element of the appeal proposal has not influenced my decision.
9. Having taken account of all the matters raised, for the reasons that I have given, I will dismiss the appeal.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR