



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 April 2023

by J Wellstead BA(Hons) MA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H1515/D/22/3312924

2 La Plata Grove, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4LA

- 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 Chris Ower against the decision of Brentwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01297/HHA, dated 12 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with reduced front dormer and rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey detached dwelling set on a slightly elevated, prominent corner plot at the entrance to La Plata Grove. The immediate local area is characterised by two storey brick-built dwellings with hipped and open gable roof forms, giving a strong sense of uniformity to the street scene.
4. The appeal scheme is for a pitched roof front dormer and flat roof rear dormer with side roof light. The size of both dormers has been reduced since previous applications and the council has not objected to the choice of materials nor the rear dormer element.
5. The dormers would each be located in the centre of a large roof space and small in size in proportion to the roof. However, the front dormer would introduce an anomaly to an otherwise uniform street scene, and one that is exacerbated by the appeal site's highly visible and prominent location. This would result in an incongruous addition which would cause harm to the established character and appearance of the local area.
6. The appellant highlights an existing new build property with a flat-roofed front dormer with rendered walls further down La Plata Grove. This property is located at the very end of the cul-de-sac and the front dormer element is oriented away from the street scene and neighbouring properties and towards woodland, therefore having limited visibility in the street scene. In contrast, the appeal site is in a prominent, raised corner plot position at the entrance to La Plata Grove.

7. The dwellings at 48 London Road and 31 Queens Road have front dormers, but are located on streets with a range of building styles and designs, some of which also have front dormers so these examples are not comparable.
8. The dwelling at 66 Pondfield Road is an end-of-terrace property which is set next to open space and three-storey flats, with a range of different property styles further along the road, so is in a more mixed context than the appeal site. 7 Hornbeam Close has two front dormers but is some distance from the appeal site and, again, in a different context.
9. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the local area. It would therefore conflict with Policy BE14 of the Brentwood Local Plan, which seeks to ensure - amongst other matters - that new development responds positively and sympathetically to the context. In addition, the proposal would not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') which states that developments should be sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has stated that the front dormer is necessary to accommodate a staircase to access the proposed second floor. While I understand the reasons for this design, this does not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
11. There are no objections to the proposal from neighbouring occupiers or other authorities. However, this does not alter my conclusions on the main issue.
12. The appellant has stated that the concerns regarding substandard accommodation could be resolved with the addition of roof lights installed under permitted development rights. However, a scheme with rooflights is not before me and it is unclear whether or not they would provide adequate living conditions for occupiers.
13. Concerns have been raised by the appellant regarding the Council having taken inconsistent approaches to similar applications. However, this matter is not determinative as to the acceptability of the proposal, and I have therefore considered the appeal based on the evidence before me.
14. Planning permission has been previously granted on the appeal property for a hip to gable roof extension with a dormer and rooflights to rear¹. A previous application also secured permission for a rear dormer with Juliette balcony and rooflight to side². I note that construction of a rear dormer with Juliette Balcony and rooflight to side was found to be lawful under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. However, as these schemes do not include the front dormer element, they would have a lesser impact on the character and appearance of the local area and therefore do not alter my conclusions above.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given, I conclude that the development conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole. No material considerations have been shown to carry sufficient weight to warrant a decision otherwise than in

¹ 22/00707/HHA

² 22/00552/S192

accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

J Wellstead

INSPECTOR

