



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2023

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P4415/D/23/3315444

11 Thoresby Close, Rotherham S26 2EJ

- 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 Robert Johnston against the decision of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref RB2022/1211, dated 1 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is proposed part loft conversion with dormers and raised ridge.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are: the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host bungalow and streetscene; and the effect on the living conditions of neighbours, with regards privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. No.11 Thoresby Close (No.11) is a detached bungalow, with a pitched roof, located on the west side of Thoresby Close, a residential cul-de-sac. It is proposed to increase the height of the rear part of the existing roof to create a room (office) in the roofspace with dormer windows.
4. Design Guidance 1.1 of the Council's *Householder Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document* (2020) (SPD) recognises that it is important that an extension is in proportion with the existing house to avoid it looking unbalanced and incongruous, particularly if neighbouring houses are similar in design. In respect of raising the roof height of bungalows, Design Guidance 2.13 states that dormers should be modest in size, relative to the size of the roof, should be designed to reflect the architectural character of the house and should not project above the ridge level.
5. The proposed dormers would project significantly above the existing ridge level by around 1.1m and, although sited to the rear of the roof, would extend almost the full width of the bungalow. The ridge of the dormers would run perpendicular to the existing ridgeline with a pitched gable to each flank. This

design, in combination with the height and width, means the dormers would appear a disproportionate and unsympathetic addition. The siting to the rear would entirely unbalance the roof form, failing to reflect the architectural character, and unduly dominating the host bungalow. There is therefore a clear conflict with both Design Guidance 1.1 and 2.13 of the SPD.

6. I observed on my site visit that this part of Thorseby Close is characterised by bungalows on either side that have a simple plan and roof form with a shallow pitched roof and gable facing the road. Although fenestration details have been altered, there is a uniform and cohesive character and appearance to the streetscene. No.11 and its neighbours on the west side of Thorseby Close are well spaced, separated by driveways providing access to garages set toward the rear of each plot. Because of this arrangement, the rear of the roof of each bungalow contributes to the streetscene. The proposed dormer extension would be highly visible in, and an incongruous addition to, this street scene and would be at odds with the uniform character I describe.
7. The appellant has referred to No.1 Thorseby Close (No.1) which has been extended to the side and the ridge of the new hipped roof sits above the original ridge of the gable facing Thorseby Close. Whilst I accept the similarities in ridge levels, No.1 is quite different to the appeal property, located on a generous corner plot with the side extension returning the corner to Haddon Way and assimilating well within the streetscene. I do not therefore find it directly comparable to the appeal scheme before me which, in any event, should be considered on its individual merits and site characteristics.
8. On the first main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed dormer extension would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host bungalow and the streetscene. In addition to the conflict with the SPD guidance, it would conflict with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in so far as it requires development to add to the overall quality of an area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. It would also conflict with Policy CS28 and SP55 of the Rotherham Local Plan: Core Strategy 2013-2028 (2014) (LP) which together requires the design of development to be high quality, reinforce and complement local distinctiveness and take all opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area.

Living conditions

9. SPD Design Guidance 2.11 outlines that increased overlooking of neighbouring properties can be a problem, especially with a bungalow where dormer windows in the loft can overlook previously private areas.
10. To the rear of No.11 are two-storey houses that front Thorseby Close and I observed on site that because of differences in site levels, the first floor windows of these houses broadly aligns with the ground floor of the appeal property. The proposed extension would introduce a large first floor window on the rear elevation directly facing the houses to the rear. Although set behind the existing conservatory, the extension would be only around 7m from the common boundary and there would therefore be increased overlooking to the first floor (bedroom) windows and garden of the nearest house at No.25 Thorseby Close.

11. A window is also proposed on each flank of the dormer gables facing the immediate neighbours at No.9 and No.15 Thorseby Close (No.9 and No.15). There are two centrally located windows on the flank elevation of No.15, but these are obscured glazed and because the siting of the proposed dormer is toward the rear of No.11 there would be no direct overlooking of these windows such to cause a loss of privacy. No.9's driveway separates it from No.11 and it has its front door and a large window (which appeared to be to a habitable room) on the flank elevation facing No.11. The outlook from the proposed window would principally be over the roof of No.9, but there would nonetheless be a degree of overlooking to previously private areas, notably over the driveway and front door, resulting in some loss of privacy.
12. Consequently, on the second main issue, I conclude that the proposed dormer extension would cause harm to the living conditions of the neighbours at No.9 and No.25 Thoresby Close through loss of privacy. It would therefore conflict with the SPD guidance, paragraph 130 of the Framework and LP policies CS28 and SP55 which, amongst other things, require good design and development to create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Jones

INSPECTOR