



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2023

by R J Redford MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1775/D/23/3320260

54 Ripley Grove, Portsmouth PO3 6NJ

- 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 Ms Megan Pople against the decision of Portsmouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01608/HOU, dated 18 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 26 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is the construction of dormers to front and rear roof slopes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters and Main Issue

2. It is noted that the appellant considers the scheme a resubmission of a previous application, reference 22/01000/HOU.
3. The Council do not object to the proposed rear dormer. Due to the visually concealed nature of the rear of the dwellings along the Ripley Grove, the proximity to the neighbouring properties, and the lack of any evidence to the contrary, I am in agreement. The main issue is, therefore, the effect of the proposed front dormer on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and Ripley Grove.

Reasons

4. Ripley Grove is a straight road forming part of a grid of residential streets dominated by traditionally designed, terraced and semi-detached, 2 storey dwellings built closely together. Properties along Ripley Grove are similar in size and follow a strong linear building line, with little deviation along the frontages or the roof line. There are no obvious examples of front facing dormers along the full length of the road, though there are examples of converted roof spaces utilising rear dormers and front facing roof lights. The modest proportions of the properties form part of the area's character, according to the Council's Urban Characterisation Study (UCS).
5. The proposed front facing dormer would be reasonably large and extend to the ridge of the host dwelling's roof. It would be set back from the eaves, in line with the existing bay windows. If the host dwelling were in isolation the proposal would not significantly overwhelm its frontage. However, the host dwelling is half of a semi-detached pair and forms part of the wider Ripley Grove street scene, so cannot be considered in isolation from the broader character and appearance of the area.

6. The proposed front facing dormer would alter the host dwelling's roof form considerably. It would interrupt the cadence which is created by the simple linear roof lines along Ripley Grove and enforced by the proximity of dwellings to each other. The proposal would therefore significantly harm the character and appearance of Ripley Grove.
7. It is appreciated that there are examples of forward-facing gables on several properties towards the centre of Ripley Grove. However, they are a specific design feature of those terraced properties and their location within the street scene only serves to emphasise the more simplistic, linear roof form of the other properties along the road.
8. The main parties have drawn my attention to a refused appeal on Liss Road, and 2 approved applications on Winton Road. Although both roads are of a similar terraced layout to Ripley Grove, they are some distance from it and have different patterns of development along them, not least in relation to alterations to front roof slopes. They simply serve to indicate that the specific circumstances and context of each case is important, and each decision should turn on the specific planning merits of that case. I am satisfied that although there may be similar elements to that proposed, the context of the 3 applications is not sufficiently similar for me to draw a direct comparison which would weigh for or against the proposal.
9. The lack of a design code or neighbourhood plan does not negate the clear expectations for high quality design set out in PP Policy PCS23 and the UCS. The date of adoption of the PP is acknowledged to be prior to the National Planning Policy Framework (Frameworks). However, this does not mean the PP is out of date and in this case the relevant policies align with one of the Framework's aims, to achieve well-designed places.
10. Consequently, the proposed front dormer would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of Ripley Grove, and the host dwelling as part of that road. It would fail to comply with Policy PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan (PP) which seeks new development to be of high-quality design which respects the local context.

Conclusion

11. Although the proposal turns on the harm identified in relation to the proposed front facing dormer, it is unclear from the plans submitted how this element could be separated from the rest of that proposed. Consequently, I do not consider it appropriate to provide a split decision.
12. Therefore, for the reasons given above the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole and there are no sufficiently weighted material considerations, including the Framework, that would indicate a decision otherwise. The appeal is, therefore, dismissed.

RJ Redford

INSPECTOR