



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 June 2023

by K Winnard LL.B Hons Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/3320126

79 Whitehills Road Loughton IG10 1TU

- 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 David Stringer against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/0178/23, dated 27 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 24 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is the hip to gable loft conversion with rear dormer and side enclosure for proposed staircase.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council adopted the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 (2023) (the Local Plan) on the 6 March 2023. Since submission of the appeal, the Adopted Local Plan 1998 and Alterations 2006 has been revoked following the period for a legal challenge. Policy DBE10 of the Adopted Local Plan and Alterations 2006 is now redundant. Policy DM9 of the Local Plan, also referred to in the reasons for refusal, is now the principal development plan policy relevant to this appeal and the basis on which I determine this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property, No 79 Whitehills Road, (No 79), is a semi detached property with a set back side gable extension incorporating a front pitched roof dormer sited on the north western side of Whitehills Road, located within a residential area. This side of the street has a generally consistent character of semi detached dwellings set back from the road behind front gardens. The properties on the north western side of Whitehills Road have hipped roofs whereas those on the opposite side of the road have gable ends. This lends itself to an uniform pattern of development in the road as it bends and rises from its junction with Newmans Lane. Whilst some properties have been subject to extensions, their roof forms generally respect the slopes and style of

the original dwelling. Nor do they significantly alter the character of the area which on the whole retains the style and appearance of the original built development.

5. Whilst the appeal property has previously been extended, the extension is set back and down from the original dwelling, and as such the side gable extension is not unduly prominent within the streetscene such as to interrupt the pattern of development noted above. The appeal proposal is an application for an identical extension previously refused by the Council. I am advised that no revisions have been made to accommodate the concerns previously expressed by the Council who remain concerned at the style, design and visual dominance of the proposal. No further details of their concerns have been given by the Council.
6. Extending across the rear and incorporating a hip to gable roof extension and first floor side extension, the proposal would add considerable bulk to No 79. In particular the addition of the side extension, which would accommodate a staircase to access the loft conversion, sited adjacent to the existing dormer window, and over the existing ground floor roof would be an incongruous feature. It would change the appearance of the front of the house and significantly increase its visual impact. In combination with the hip to gable extension it would be a dominant feature within the streetscene, particularly in views when approaching along Whitehills Road from the north east. As such it would be at odds with the scale and pattern of the hipped roofs found generally on this side of the street and would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.
7. I accept that there is little visual symmetry with the attached neighbouring property and that in itself the side extension is a relatively small addition. However it would be an integral part of the overall design and would be a noticeable feature of the front elevation of No 79 resulting in a complicated design which would appear out of place in this location. The rear dormer extension would require a major alteration in the shape of the roof to accommodate its size, however it would not be readily visible. I appreciate that No 79 is not a listed building nor within a Conservation Area. Nonetheless, the overall scale and design of the proposed development would be at odds with the current appearance of No 79 to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area.
8. The appellant refers me to a number of extensions on the street with varied roof forms and styles as a common feature along the street. However, on the whole these extensions and roof forms reflect the existing roof slopes of the house type found on the side of the road on which they are located and are not at odds with the overall appearance of the dwellings. My specific attention has also been drawn to a similar side enclosure extension on Whitehills Road. Whilst I observed this side extension on my site visit, I am not aware of the full circumstances surrounding this development. However I noted that the stair extension enclosure is well set back from the road and is assimilated into the design and style of the original dwelling. Moreover the property is one of a limited number of properties on the part of Whitehills Road which links to Wellfields, an adjacent road, and which gives this stretch of road a different character. As such its context differs from the proposal before me. Accordingly it merits limited weight and does not lend me to a different view in this case.

9. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal proposal would be a visually obtrusive form of development and would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such it would be in conflict with Policy DM9 of the Local Plan which requires development to relate positively to its locality and for extensions to respect the form and setting of the original building. It would also be in conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to promote development sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

10. In reaching my decision, I have had regard to references in the National Planning Policy Framework which support the development, including the need to achieve sustainable development and the effective use of land. I acknowledge that the proposal would be of benefit to the appellant in providing enhanced living accommodation and note too that the development is acceptable in relation to the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. However these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified in relation to the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area. The appellant highlights that the property would be constructed in materials which match the immediate streetscene, however aspects of good design are fundamental to all development and would not represent a notable benefit.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, and having regard to all matters raised, I hereby dismiss the appeal.

K Winnard

INSPECTOR