



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2023

by A Caines BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N4720/D/23/3321759

19 Wike Ridge Mount, Alwoodley, Leeds LS17 9NP

- 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 & Mrs Mackenzie against the decision of Leeds City Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00143/FU, dated 6 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 6 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing sub-floor void to habitable accommodation, loft conversion including increasing height of ridge and rear dormer extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The Council has only raised objections to the roof alterations. I agree with this approach, and so, have limited my assessment to only this part of the scheme.
3. Thus, the main issues are the effect of the proposed roof alterations on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area; and
 - ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of 17 Wike Ridge Mount with particular regards to dominance and overshadowing.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Wike Ridge Mount and the surrounding streets are part of a planned residential estate of detached houses within an attractive suburban setting.
5. The appeal property is situated towards the head of a cul-de-sac. It is significant that the property is one of a matching pair with No 17. These houses are constructed of stone under a 'cross gable' tile roof and contribute positively to the street scene, both individually and as a pair.
6. The proposed loft conversion works include raising the height of the roof by approximately 0.5 metres, together with a steeper front roof pitch that brings the ridgeline further forward, and a flat roof rear dormer.
7. Saved Policies BD6 and GP5 of the Leeds City Council Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) (the UDP) require alterations and extensions to respect the scale, form, detailing and materials of the original building, and be well designed generally. Similarly, Policy P10 of the Leeds City Council Core Strategy (amended 2019) (the CS) requires, amongst other things, that new

- development delivers high-quality design that respects the character and quality of surrounding buildings and contributes positively to place making.
8. Also relevant is the Council's Householder Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012) (SPD), which advises that roof styles often contribute significantly to the appearance and character of a house, and so, the roof of any extension should replicate the proportions, pitch, shape and materials of the main house. In respect of dormer windows, it is advised that these should be small and retain a substantial area of the original roof.
 9. The proposed increase in the height of the roof would be relatively modest in and of itself, but in combination with the alterations to the front roof pitch and position of the ridgeline, would adversely affect the shape and proportions of the main roof and, in turn, cause the side gable elevations to appear unbalanced. These harmful effects would be particularly conspicuous when experienced in context with No 17, also harmfully disrupting their relationship as a matching pair.
 10. Furthermore, the rear dormer would be a substantial structure occupying a disproportionately large part of the rear roof plane. Its excessive size and box-like form would be out of keeping with the form and proportions of the host building, and despite being set in marginally from the edges of the roof, would create the impression of a flat-roofed third storey at the rear. Whilst the dormer would not be highly visible from the public realm, this does not obviate the need for good design. Indeed, paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents.
 11. My attention has been drawn to other schemes that have been approved by the Council, including at 10 and 12 Wike Ridge Mews, and 23 Wike Ridge Avenue. However, the impacts of each individual case will vary, depending upon the particular characteristics of the site and the particular detailed proposal. For example, the roof pitch and ridgeline alteration at 12 Wike Ridge Mews was pushed to the rear rather than the front and, crucially, as the property is not identical to its neighbours, the change is less conspicuous. In any event, I have reached my own conclusions rather than relying on the approach the Council has taken elsewhere. If anything, the large box dormer I saw at 23 Wike Ridge Avenue has only served to demonstrate to me the harm that can be caused by such development.
 12. I have had regard to the potential of utilising permitted development rights to construct a rear dormer. However, in my view, such a scheme would be unlikely to produce something less desirable than the proposal now before me, particularly in respect of the ridgeline and gable alterations. The dormer would also be smaller. Consequently, I attach negligible weight to this matter in the context of this appeal.
 13. In conclusion, I find that the roof alterations would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host building and its immediate surroundings. This is contrary to the design requirements of CS Policy P10, saved UDP Policies GP5 and BD6, and the SPD. The proposal is also contrary to the Framework with regards to achieving well designed places.

Living conditions

14. The appeal property is set back from and to the west of 17 Wike Ridge Mount. The Council is concerned that the additional bulk and height of the roof alterations would appear overbearing and cause overshadowing of the rear garden and windows at No 17.
15. The rear of No 17 is south facing and therefore benefits from good levels of light throughout the day. Though the development would add some bulk to the roofspace, it would not project any closer to the boundary, or further beyond the main rear elevation. It would also be located above the eye line in views from the rear windows of No 17. With the further assistance of the appellant's Sun Path Analysis and 45-degree code test, I am satisfied that the roof alterations would not be unduly dominant or cause any significant overshadowing over and above that which already exists in relation to No 17.
16. As such, I conclude that the roof alterations would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of 17 Wike Ridge Mount with particular regards to dominance and overshadowing. Thus, there is no conflict with the requirements of CS Policy P10; saved UDP Policy GP5; and Policy HDG2 of the SPD, insofar as they seek to protect the living conditions of neighbours. However, the absence of harm in this regard is a neutral matter.

Conclusion

17. The proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings, and as a result, conflicts with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR