

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 June 2023

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16/08/2023

Appeal Reference: APP/V1505/D/23/3317942

5 Fairfield Rise, Billericay CM12 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 Ferdinand against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application (reference 22/01703/FULL, dated 1 December 2022) was refused by notice dated 27 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a *"loft conversion with box dormers; new oak frontage and new pitched roof to existing porch; new small front dormer"*.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a *"loft conversion with box dormers; new oak frontage and new pitched roof to existing porch; new small front dormer"*, at 5 Fairfield Rise, Billericay CM12 9NP, in accordance with the terms of the planning application (reference 22/01703/FULL, dated 1 December 2022), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a residential area in the south-western part of Billericay. Fairfield Rise is aligned east-west, with substantial properties on both the northern and southern frontages. These are in the form of detached and semi-detached houses on good sized plots, with mature gardens. The houses are set back from the roadside, with front gardens that provide both off-street parking and space for planting, which softens the streetscene. Many of the houses have been modified and extended over the years and there is now a considerable variety in the design and appearance of properties in Fairfield Rise.
4. Number 5 Fairfield Rise is a substantial semi-detached house that was originally, no doubt, much like others in the road. It has been considerably

- altered and extended, however, and the building has been given a contemporary character by the use of modern materials. The adjoining pair (at number 7) has also been extended, although that intervention has retained more of the original character, notwithstanding the conversion of the hipped roof to create a new gable.
5. It is now proposed to make further changes to the house at number 5. The roof would be altered to create a gabled form, with substantial box dormers on the rear roof slopes. The proposed changes to the roof would alter the front elevation and a new porch and dormer would also be added.
 6. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities. The achievement of good design includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation in new development.
 7. Policies in the Development Plan also share these planning objectives. In particular, Policy BAS BE12 of the 'Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies' (dated 2007) contains specific criteria for the assessment of residential extensions, reflecting basic planning principles. New development should not cause material harm to the streetscene generally nor to the residential amenities of immediate neighbours.
 8. The proposed front porch and front dormer would introduce new features on the front elevation but they would be modest in scale and would not be out of place architecturally. The new gabled form for the main roof structure would be acceptable in its context.
 9. The rear dormers would be somewhat clumsy in appearance and would be large in scale in relation to the pitched roof structure. It has not been clearly shown (for example by the issue of a "Lawful Development Certificate") that they have been designed in accordance with the criteria for permitted development. Nevertheless, I accept that they would be similar in character to such features and not out of place in a suburban environment, notwithstanding my misgivings about their architectural quality.
 10. In short, I have concluded that the proposed extensions and alterations would not be so incongruous in design terms that a refusal of planning permission would be justified.
 11. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed development would be a useful addition to the accommodation at number 5 Fairfield Rise. I am persuaded that the scheme would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host building or its surroundings and I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with national or local planning policies (including the Development Plan).

12. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have not found anything to cause me to alter my decision.
13. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of those suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal), subject to modifications necessary, in my opinion, in the interests of clarity and enforceability. In particular, I have concluded that conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained.
14. In defining the planning permission, I have noted that there are two versions of various drawings, showing alternative finishes for the proposed dormers on the rear elevation. I have formed the opinion that the "horizontal weatherboard cladding" would be preferable and, for the avoidance of doubt, I have incorporated a condition to that effect.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

- drawing number 22017-EX-050 (Location Plan);
- drawing number 22017/EX-060 (Existing Site Plan);
- drawing number 22017-EX-100 (Existing Ground Floor Plan);
- drawing number 22017-EX-110 (Existing First Floor Plan);
- drawing number 22017-EX-120 (Existing Loft Floor Plan);
- drawing number 22017-EX-150 (Existing Roof Plan);
- drawing number 22017-EX-200 (Existing Front Elevation);
- drawing number 22017-EX-210 (Existing Rear Elevation);
- drawing number 22017-EX-220 (Existing Side A Elevation);
- drawing number 22017-EX-230 (Existing Side B Elevation);
- drawing number 22017/EX-301 (Existing Sections);
- drawing number 22017-EX-910 (Existing Front Side 3D View);
- drawing number 22017-EX-920 (Existing Rear Side 3D View);
- drawing number 22017/PL-002 (Proposed Site Plan);
- drawing number 22017-PL-100 (Proposed Ground Floor Plan);
- drawing number 22017-PL-110 (Proposed First Floor Plan);
- drawing number 22017-PL-120 (Proposed Second Floor Plan);
- drawing number 22017-PL-150 (Proposed Roof Plan);
- drawing number 22017-PL-200 (Proposed Front Elevation);
- drawing number 22017-PL-210 (Proposed Rear Elevation (Revised));
- drawing number 22017-PL-220 (Proposed Side A Elevation (Revised));
- drawing number 22017-PL-230 (Proposed Side B Elevation (Revised));
- drawing number 22017/PL-300 (Proposed Section 01);
- drawing number 22017-PL-910 (Proposed Front Side 3D View);
- drawing number 22017-PL-920 (Proposed Rear Side 3D View) (Revised).

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building, save that the sides of the rear dormers hereby approved shall be clad in "horizontal weatherboard cladding" in accordance with the approved drawings.