



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 August 2023

By Terrence Kemmann-Lane JP DipTP FRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/23/3319732
138 Station Road, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3BW

- 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 and Mrs Rouvray against the decision of Southend-on-Sea City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02306/FULH, dated 29 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is erect first floor front/side extension, convert garage into habitable accommodation and alter front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Preliminary matters

2. The application form described the proposed development as "Convert garage into study and utility room. First floor extension". The council changed this to the description used in the heading above. I have adopted it as it more clearly identifies the development proposed.
3. The application form also named the applicants as Mr and Mrs Egan. The form was submitted by an agent who, I am told, had taken the name from an email address that used a maiden name. I am satisfied that the appellants' surname that I have used in the heading above correctly identifies the applicants.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling, the streetscene and the area generally.

Reasons

5. The appeal site lies on the east side of Station Road, just to the north of the junction with London Road. A supermarket is located at the north east corner of the junction with Station Road. North of this are three detached properties, with No.138 (the appeal dwelling) being the third. The first (No.130) is a 1920s or 30s chalet bungalow with a full gable facing the road, the next (No.132) a sixties style property which appears to contain flats. This also has a gabled roof with the ridge parallel to the road. Following on northwards from the appeal site is a pair of Victorian semi-detached houses, then mainly detached chalet bungalows. Opposite the appeal site, there is a block of two storey retirement flats with a flat roof. Overall, the road has a varied character.

6. The appeal dwelling has a hipped main roof, with the short ridge parallel to the road. There is a forward projecting gable on the southern side, with a rather awkwardly placed hipped dormer immediately adjoining on its north side. This dormer is situated in the main roof, the front slope of which, save for the forwarded projecting gable, is in the form of a 'catslide' down to the top of the garage. The catslide also provides a porch. At ground floor there is a hip-roofed bay window in the gabled element. The dormer, the bay window and, in particular, the rather over dominant garage, detract from a rather simple form that on its own would have a pleasing appearance.
7. The appeal proposal is to convert the garage into living accommodation, and built a first floor above it. This would displace the 'cat-slide' element of the roof, the extension being a forward projection under a hipped roof. The width of this element of the façade would be about two-thirds of the width of gabled element on the other side. The space between the new hipped projection and the existing gabled element would be filled by first floor accommodation that would be under a flat roof spanning the space between the hip and the gable elements. This flat roof would be at the ridge level of the new hipped-roof, but would run across to meet the gabled element some distance below its ridge. Below this flat roof would be another sloping roof that would come down to the eaves of the 2 outer elements. Below this element would be a vertical façade with a window similar to that in the existing dormer. The top of this window does not appear to line up with the 2 windows in the outer elements. Below this window the existing porch would remain under a sloping roof that would follow the line of the original 'catslide'.
8. This, and the following paragraph, set out the basis of the appellants' case. It is argued that the hipped roof over the proposed extension would mimic that of the existing dormer roof which is to be removed; it would improve the appearance of the dwelling by separating the hipped roof from the gable, provide 2 more distinct forms, and enhance their outline. It is also suggested that, because the appeal dwelling and its neighbours to the south are set back compared with the buildings on either side, the provision of additional mass would be without any harmful visual impact: thus it is said that the circumstances at the site are an example of where a front extension can be implemented without being dominant or detrimental to the wider townscape.
9. It is also argued that the increase in built form located on the north side of the property would serve to smooth the transition between the front walls of No.138 and 140 at first floor level, and alter the relationship of properties in the streetscene in a positive manner. Because the size of the extension would not be significant, being at first floor level only, having a narrower width and lower height than the existing gable, the gable would remain the most prominent feature of the elevation. The use of a hipped roof over the new element would replicate that of the existing dormer. The separation of the hipped and gabled roofs would be an improvement on the current confused arrangement. A new section of sloping roof at the same pitch as the existing would result in the main roof appearing more resolved. The inclusion of a section of flat roof would not be harmful as it would not be visible from the street.

10. I disagree with most of these points. The existing dwelling has a clear hierarchy of elements which come together in a coherent and pleasing form. The proposed first floor extension would become quite dominant, standing out from the existing gable element. Its narrower width with hipped roof would be at odds with the gable and the fenestration would similarly add to the confused design. The linking element between the two would appear fussy and clumsy, and whilst the flat roof part may not be that apparent, there would be a visible disjoint in the angle of the roof slope below that flat roof.
11. The totality of the alterations would significantly change the appearance of the house to the detriment of the existing design, becoming a highly visible and incongruent collection of elements. I conclude that the effect of the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling, the streetscene and the area generally. It would therefore be contrary to the objectives of Policies DM1 and DM3(5) of the Development Management Document and the Design and Townscape Guide.
12. For these reasons I will dismiss the appeal.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR