
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 September 2023

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/23/3325370

52 Chestnut Grove, Wilmington, Kent, DA2 7PG

- 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 P Cook against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. DA/23/00173/FUL, dated 9 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is front dormer to an existing loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the appearance of the appeal property and the character of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached bungalow with rooms in the roof space created by a rear dormer window and front rooflights. Although elsewhere in the road and on the wider estate there are two-storey houses, this section of Chestnut Grove is characterised by bungalows of similar original style. There are examples of rear dormer windows and front rooflights, but the overall appearance is one of largely unaltered roof slopes.
4. The proposal would not undermine the established pattern of semi-detached single-storey buildings. However, the front dormer would introduce a form of development that is not typical in this building group. It would be a reasonably large addition positioned closed to the roof ridge, and would appear quite dominant on the property viewed alongside the existing rear dormer. In addition, the combination of the double-pitched dormer roof, the rooflights and front gable would create an unacceptably cluttered elevation that would detract from the appearance of the dwelling.
5. The proposal would be obtrusive in the roofscape. I acknowledge that the appeal property and area are not designated heritage assets, but the simplicity of the mostly unaltered front roof slopes is a distinctive part of the local character and appearance which warrants consideration. The use of matching materials and pitched roofs to reflect the existing gable would not mitigate the adverse visual impact.

6. I agree with the appellant's view that there is no development plan policy which places a presumption against front dormer windows. However, the guidance in the preamble to Policy DP7 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan 2017 (DDP) advises that dormers should not dominate the appearance of the existing dwelling and are unlikely to be appropriate on front roof slopes; and that even if at the rear, dormers should be set down from the ridgeline.
7. This approach is reflected in DDP Policy DP2, which amongst other criteria, seeks good design which responds to, reinforces and enhances positive aspects of the locality, with consideration of how the mass, form, scale, siting, detailing and roof form of proposals relate to neighbouring buildings, as well as the wider locality. In this case, the absence of other front dormer windows is a relevant part of the context, and makes the proposal appear more intrusive than may be the case in a more varied street scene.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the appearance of the appeal property and the character of the area. This would be contrary to DDP Policy DP2, and DDP Policy DP7, which supports extensions provided that the historical pattern and form of development is preserved, and the design proposed is not visually obtrusive.
9. Insofar as they reinforce the approach in the existing local plan, I have given some weight to emerging Policies M1 and M11 of the Dartford Local Plan Pre-Submission (Publication) Document 2021, given the stage in the examination process.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR