



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 August 2023

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/D/23/3320842

106 Durrants Drive, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire, WD3 3NS

- 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 Graham against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/0045/FUL, dated 11 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 20 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Proposed minor extension of Permitted Development dormer (ref: 22/2096/CLPD) and alterations to rear of existing side extension to include external staircase from first floor to proposed second floor roof terrace.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council's decision describes the proposal as 'Loft conversion including rear dormer window including Juliet Balcony, front rooflights; alterations to roof form of existing two storey side extension, erection of external staircase to rear to create a roof terrace with glass balustrading at second floor level'. As this describes the proposal more accurately, I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Reasons

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. The development plan includes policies CP1 and CP12 in the Council's Core Strategy (2011), policy DM1 and Appendix 2 in its Development Management Policies document (2013) and policies CA2 and Appendices B and C of the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan (2018). Together, these seek to ensure that development is of a high quality. National policy in the National Planning Policy Framework has a similar objective.
4. The appeal dwelling is a two storey semi-detached house with a pitched roof. It has been previously extended to include a two storey side extension with a lower pitched roof and single storey pitched roofed rear extensions. It occupies a position on the edge of this residential estate at the end of Durrants Drive with its side gable end facing across Little Green Lane, a narrow rural lane onto which the end dwellings on adjoining roads also have facing side elevations, to fields beyond.

5. A certificate of lawful development was granted earlier this year under ref 22/2096/CLPD for a loft conversion that included a rear dormer window and front rooflights. That development has not been implemented. The proposed dormer under the current proposal would extend across the whole of the main roofslope, unlike the previous scheme in which it was set in from the edge of the roof and some 1.3m less in width. The pitched roofs of both the existing two storey side extension and one of the existing single storey extensions would be altered to flat roofs to provide a roof terrace at second floor level and an external staircase linking the first and second floors.
6. The proposal would be clearly seen from Little Green Lane. The additional width of the dormer on the rear elevation would make it bulkier and more prominent than the approved scheme. Although the height of the building on its side elevation would be reduced and the balcony would be glazed, the resulting side elevation would have a pitched roof on its front part and a flat roof across the rear part. This would result in an unattractive side elevation that would be overly dominant and at odds with the pitched roof design of the dwelling and most of those in the area. It would be contrary in particular to Appendix 2 which requires that dormers are subordinate to the main roof and to Appendix C which discourages flat roofs on side extensions.
7. Whilst there are a number of large full width dormers in the area, it is likely that many of those will have been built as permitted development and not all of those contribute positively to the character or appearance of the area. At my visit, I did not see any full width dormers on dwellings that have a side elevation onto Little Green Lane.
8. I did note that a contemporary style dwelling with a large flat roof and open balcony has recently been built at the rear of a dwelling on Links Way and facing onto Little Green Lane. However, as that is a new dwelling it has a different context from that of an extension to an existing dwelling but in any case, the roof and balcony are at a much lower height than proposed here.
9. On the opposite corner of Durrants Way and overlooking Little Green Lane, there is a dwelling which has a full height corner window and Juliet balcony. Those differ from this scheme because they are at first floor level in an extension with a subsidiary pitched roof. I therefore saw no other developments in the area that would set a precedent for this proposal.
10. Furthermore, the proposed roof terrace and external staircase would draw attention to the excessive scale and inappropriate siting of the dormer. An external staircase is a feature not commonly seen on a single dwelling and would detract from its domestic character.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given and by reason of its siting, scale and design, I conclude that this is a poorly designed scheme which would cause significant harm to the character or appearance of the dwelling and the area. It would be contrary to the development plan policies referred to earlier. There are no material considerations that would outweigh that. The appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector