



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2023

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12.10.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/D/23/3317579

23 Greenfields Avenue, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2ED

- 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 Rigel Jenman against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 58996/002, dated 20 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is conversion of loft space to habitable accommodation, two pitched dormers & roof light windows to front elevation, addition of a pitched roof and flat roof dormer to first floor rear elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the description of the proposal from the Council's decision notice. It adequately and simply describes the proposed development instead of the much longer and detailed description given on the application form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development upon:
 - the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area; and,
 - the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring houses, with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site relates to a single storey detached bungalow with a side porch and rear conservatory. Houses on the appeal site side of the road are also bungalows. Nos 27 and 21 have rear extensions and the latter, neighbouring house, has flat roofed front and rear dormers.
5. The proposed development would extend across almost the full width of the house creating a 2 storey rear wing. A crown roof would project out from just below the roof ridge, the sides of which would extend to the gable ends of the house with the eaves raised significantly higher than on the main house. As a result, the proposed extension would dominate the rear of the property. It

would appear at odds with surrounding houses which generally have single storey extensions more subservient to their respective host property's. The higher eaves would give it an awkward top heavy appearance and the crown roof would be out of keeping with other houses nearby. The proposed rear dormer would also appear at odds with other houses which have dormers in their existing roof space, rather than on extensions.

6. Overall, I conclude on this main issue that the proposed development fails to harmonise with the existing building and would thus harm its appearance and be out of character with surrounding development. Although it would only be visible from the rear gardens of neighbouring houses, it would be contrary to Policy CP29 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014) (CS), Policy HE2 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review (2006) (LP), Policy DE2 of the Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011 to 2028 (2021) (NP) and the Residential Extensions & Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document (2018) (SPD) which require development to take account of the design, scale and character of the original building and its setting. Paragraph 130 f of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), referred to in the Council's reason for refusing the application on design grounds, deals with amenity and is not relevant to this issue.

Living conditions

7. There is currently limited potential for overlooking from the appeal property into neighbours' gardens because of the height of the boundary fences in relation to ground floor windows and the angle and height of the existing roof lights. The proposed rear dormer would increase overlooking and would therefore conflict with the SPD, which advises that windows should not result in overlooking of private amenity space. However, I note that other properties in the area have extensions with windows overlooking neighbouring gardens, including No 21, which has a rear dormer that overlooks the appeal site. Furthermore, as the appellant has suggested, a rear dormer constructed under permitted development rights would cause overlooking too. Because the proposed dormer would be on an extension, rather than on the roof of the existing house as would be the case with a permitted development, it would be further into the garden thus restricting views of neighbouring gardens and having less potential for overlooking.
8. I do not therefore consider that the proposed development would lead to a loss of privacy and harm to neighbours' living conditions to the extent that it would warrant withholding planning permission. The proposal would not therefore conflict with Paragraph 130 f of the Framework, and the general advice of the SPD which seek a high standard of amenity and to prevent unrestricted views into rear gardens. Policies CP27 and CP29 of the CS, Policy HE2 of the LP and Policy DE2 of the NP, referred to in the Council's reason for refusing the application on amenity grounds, deal with pollution and design quality and are not directly relevant to this issue.

Other matters

9. I have had regard to the appellant's comments on the sustainability of the proposal and the need for a larger family home. However, they do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

10. Although the appellant listed examples of development permitted by the Council elsewhere, no details of these schemes have been provided to me and I am, therefore, unable to assess any direct comparability with the current appeal proposal. In any case, I have come to my own view regarding the development rather than relying on the approach the Council may have taken elsewhere.
11. Representations raised concerns regarding parking, drainage, and the impact of construction traffic. However, these do not add to my reasons for dismissing the appeal.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR