
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2023

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3RD November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/U2615/D/23/3327645

8 Marine Drive, Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk, NR30 5NP

- 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 Barbara Fruish against the decision of Great Yarmouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 06/23/0259/HH, dated 21 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 27 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is 1. single storey rear extension, 2. loft conversion including front/rear shed dormers, 3. associated internal alterations, 4. alterations to external wall finishes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. As the parties have not confirmed that a revised description of development was agreed by the appellant, I have used that given on the original planning application form rather than on the Council's decision notice.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal building, the street scene and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached single-storey dwelling within a stretch of similarly styled properties facing towards a large sand dune, with the sea beyond. Within the group, some dwellings have front and rear dormer windows, and other roof extensions are found within the surrounding streets. The vast majority of front dormer windows are modest in scale, with reasonably generous spacing to the eaves, and in some cases, to the roof ridge above. The exception is the semi-detached pair to the south, Nos. 10 and 12 Marine Drive (Nos. 10 and 12), which both have dormer windows which occupy much of the front roof slope, and in the case of No.10, much of the rear slope too.
5. Although the appellant identifies that five of the eleven properties in the road have front dormer windows, only those at Nos. 10 and 12 occupy such a large proportion of the front roof slope. As a result, the greater number of properties

in this stretch of housing have either unaltered roof slopes or more modest dormer additions. The parties have not provided any information about the planning permissions granted for the dormer windows in the locality, although the Council's report indicates that the front dormer window at No.10 was granted in 2014. As such, it pre-dates the Council's current planning policies and the emphasis on design quality set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework).

6. Amongst other criteria, Policy CS9 of the Great Yarmouth Local Plan: Core Strategy 2013-2030 (2015) (CS) seeks to ensure that new development responds to, and draws inspiration from, the surrounding area's distinctive built characteristics in matters including scale, form and massing. This is reinforced by Policy H9 of the Great Yarmouth Local Plan Part 2 (2021) (LP), which supports residential extensions provided that they maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the building, street scene, its immediate surroundings and the wider townscape or landscape.
7. In this context, the amount of additional bulk to the roof of the building arising from the front and rear dormer windows would be excessive and at odds with the scale and form of the appeal property. The proposal would give the property a 'top heavy' and almost flat-roofed appearance, and the existing roof profile would be lost. Although the proposal may appear similar in scale to the extensions at Nos. 10 and 12, it would nevertheless be out of keeping with the prevailing pattern of more modestly proportioned roof extensions found elsewhere in Marine Drive and nearby roads.
8. The parties agree that a generous rear dormer window could be built as 'Permitted Development' (PD), but the 'fallback' position would not allow for a front dormer window. However, the visual impact of a PD scheme on the appeal property and street scene would not be so significant as proposed in this case, and therefore would not justify acceptance of the proposal.
9. The appellant has drawn attention to a development at 70 Second Avenue, but as it is quite different in form and design from the proposal it offers limited support to the appeal, except in its use of materials.
10. I appreciate that the intention is to renovate the property, and to improve its energy performance through insulation, materials, heating and double glazing. However, such improvements could be accommodated without the need for a development of the scale and form proposed. As such, this objective would not outweigh the adverse visual impact.
11. I find the proposed rear extension to be acceptable in its design and impact, having regard to the height of the rear extension at No.10 above the original building eaves. However, as designed, the proposed ground floor rear extension is not severable from the rear dormer window above, and as such I am unable to issue a split decision.
12. I therefore conclude that the combined scale, form and massing of the proposed front and rear dormer windows would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal building, the street scene, and the wider area. This would be contrary to CS Policy CS9, LP Policy H9, and the design aims set out in the Framework, which includes a requirement to ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and sympathetic to local character and the surrounding built environment.

Other Matters

13. A number of issues were raised in response to public consultation on the application, but a repeated concern was the potential for overlooking arising from the proposed rear dormer window. Having regard to the separation distances involved, the potential to exercise Permitted Development rights, and the presence of other rear dormer windows in the area, I do not consider that the development would give rise to any material increase in overlooking or loss of privacy for surrounding residents. However, this does not alter my conclusion on the main issue.
14. The appellant has raised matters relating to the processing of the planning application, but these are beyond the scope of this appeal, which has been considered on its planning merits.

Conclusion

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

H Lock

INSPECTOR