



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2023

by Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A2280/D/23/3327479

166 Wakeley Road, Rainham, Medway ME8 8NW

- 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 Mrs A Charles against the decision of Medway Council.
 - The application MC/23/1159, dated 20 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is construction of dormers to front and rear to facilitate a loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the host property and the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property comprises a two storey terraced house located on the eastern side of Wakeley Road. It fronts on to a wide pedestrian only path between other residential properties, but the rear is also visible from an access road serving further residential properties to the south. The character of the area is residential with mainly terraced housing of similar design to the appeal property. I also noted that several houses have dormers either to the front or rear, as well as in some cases, on both roof planes. Adjoining to the east, the neighbouring property, No 168 Wakeley Road, has a large rear dormer spanning the majority of the rear roof slope and looks to be of similar size to the rear dormer currently proposed.
4. A proposal for a front and rear dormer was submitted in November 2022 and was subsequently refused permission in January 2023 for a similar reason as the current proposal. A subsequent appeal was dismissed in April 2023¹ (the 2023 appeal). The difference between the two proposals, is that in the current scheme the front dormer has been reduced in depth which the Council advises would be inset approximately 1.1 metre from the front eaves. The width would remain the same, as would the size of the rear dormer.

¹ Appeal Reference APP/A2280/D/23/3315140

5. The Inspector deciding the 2023 appeal felt that there would be no objection in principle to a dormer conversion, which is a position the Council has also taken, and I see no reason to disagree with that given the presence of other dormers in the vicinity on both front and rear roof slopes. However, the Inspector found that both dormers of the size proposed would overwhelm the upper level of the main house and would have an intrusive effect as a result.
6. In response to that decision, the appellant has reduced the depth of the front dormer as noted above, so that it would be similar to the front dormer on an existing terraced house to the south of the appeal property at No 160 Wakeley Road.
7. At my site visit, I carefully noted the impact of the dormers at No 160, as well as others in the vicinity. The designs vary, with some being set well within the roof plane but others, including those at No 160, spanning almost the full width of the roof and dominating the host property as well as the street scene as a result.
8. In relation to the current appeal, I consider the same issues would continue to be the case. At the front, the dormer would appear poorly proportioned in relation to the size of the roof plane as a result of its excessive width and height close to the existing ridge height. It would dominate the roof as a result, which is of moderate size and in clear public view from Wakeley Road, and would cause harm as a result. At the rear, the same issue would arise although more so because of the increased depth of the dormer and the fact that it would adjoin a similar sized rear dormer that is present on the neighbouring property at No 168 Wakeley Road. The combination of the two, which are both clearly visible from the access road, would overwhelm the rear roof slopes and cause harm.
9. I can fully appreciate the appellant's view that the dormers would be of similar size to others in the area, and the front dormer to No 160 Wakeley Road in particular. There is no information before me as to when these were granted, if indeed some of them needed permission. However, in my view they clearly illustrate the visual harm that is caused by a poorly proportioned dormer on a terraced property, and if repeated generally throughout the area, the harm to the streetscene would be significant. They should not therefore be a good reason to allow a further proposal which would cause similar harm and add to the cumulative adverse visual impact in the area.
10. The Council raises no objections to any impact on living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties and I see no reason to take a different view.
11. For the reasons set out above, the front and rear dormers would cause visual harm to the appeal property and the local streetscene. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003, which requires that new development should be acceptable in scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with paragraphs 126 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework which stress the importance of good design being a key aspect of sustainable development.
12. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR