

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 December 2023

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/23/3327256

22 Rosemary Drive, Bromham, Bedford, MK43 8PL

- 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 & Mrs J Mackay against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00685/FUL, dated 27 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is a roof extension/conversion with render to front and part sides and garage conversion (PD) and widening of access driveway/crossover.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed roof extension/conversion on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Rosemary Drive.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a modern, detached, two storey house with an adjoining, flat roofed single garage. It is one of five similar dwellings, situated on a stepped building line facing Rosemary Drive, a spacious, established residential street. The appeal dwelling, No 22, is the most forward of the five. All five have shallow, pitched roofs with a front facing gable and feature weatherboarding. Beyond No 22 and stepped back from it is a semi-detached pair with pitched roofs which have side facing gables. Other dwellings in the street are of a similar age but with a variety of designs and finishes, including bungalows. However, shallow, pitched roofs are characteristic.
 4. The appeal dwelling and its similar neighbours form a group in a prominent section of the street. The appeal dwelling which lies opposite the junction with Godwin Way is the most prominent of the group.
 5. The Council does not object to the proposed garage conversion or the widening of the access driveway/crossover which appear to be permitted development. I agree that these would be acceptable.
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6. The proposed roof alteration would involve replacing the existing roof with a steeper pitched roof that had a ridge running parallel to the street and side facing gables. Overall it would be some 2m higher than the existing roof. The conversion would incorporate two small, pitched roof dormers on the front elevation and a single large pitched roof dormer to the rear.
7. The roof conversion would materially alter and detract from the appearance of the dwelling. Firstly, it would be noticeably higher than other houses in the street, including the semi-detached neighbour. Secondly, the roof pitch would be materially steeper which would be uncharacteristic in Rosemary Drive. Finally, the proposed front dormers would draw the eye to the roof, emphasising its height and pitch and dominant, incongruous appearance when taken in the context of its similar neighbours and the wider street scene. The prominent location of No 22 in the street would only serve to emphasise its uncharacteristic and unsympathetic appearance.
8. Overall, the changes, including the proposed render, would result in the dwelling appearing differently and less pleasingly proportioned and detailed, detracting from the characteristic appearance and rhythm of the appeal dwelling and its four similar neighbours, and the wider street scene.
9. Turning to the rear dormer, whilst large, this would sit just below the new ridge, and in and up from the eaves. It would also be seen in the context of the extended rear elevation which has a large single storey addition with a similar pitched roof. Overall, this would ensure that it was not overly dominant, or loom over the rear of the dwelling and appeared in keeping with it.
10. The appellants suggest that the dwelling as proposed would not be ugly. However, good design, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), requires that extensions and alterations are both visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. The appellants also argue that there are many loft conversions in the surrounding area, including in Brook Way, a nearby street. However, the dwellings in Brook Way are of a different design, with steeper roofs and the loft conversions I saw did not alter the pitch, orientation or overall height of the roofs. Moreover, I did not see any front facing dormers. These examples are therefore materially different from the appeal proposal.
11. It is concluded on the main issue that owing to the re-orientation of the roof, the steeper roof slope and increased height and the front facing dormers the proposed roof extension/conversion would have a materially detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Rosemary Drive. In consequence, it would conflict with Policies 28S, 29 and 30 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030, adopted 2020, design codes E1 and E2 of the adopted design guidance "Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments, 2000" and with the NPPF.
12. Taken together and amongst other things these require new development, including extensions, to be of the highest design quality in terms of scale and height such that they reflect the detailed character, including basic shape and roofscape, of the original building, contribute positively to the area's character and identity, respect the context in which they sit and promote local distinctiveness.

13. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the representations of a third party, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR