

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2024

by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V1505/D/23/3330881

33 Vowler Road, Langdon Hills, Basildon, Essex SS16 6AG

- 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 Allan Handley against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00887/FULL, dated 3 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 29 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is additional floor, side infill extension, amendments to existing front and rear fenestration and porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed additional floor and dormer window on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. No 33 is a detached bungalow in a residential road of mixed property types. Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan Saved Policies (2007) states that permission for the alteration and extension of existing dwellings will be refused if the development causes material harm to the character of the surrounding area, including the street scene.
 4. Comparisons are drawn between the appeal proposal and a previous unsuccessful proposal for similar extensions. While I note this, I have considered the proposal before me on its individual merits.
 5. The street scene along Vowler Road is varied, with a mix of single storey, one and a half storey and two storey detached and semi-detached dwellings. This results in little uniformity, with single storey dwellings positioned next to larger two storey dwellings, which would be the case with the appeal proposal. Moreover, there are examples of two storey dwellings directly opposite.
 6. The proposed first floor would be of conventional proportions and appearance, and as such it would integrate with the design of the proposed front porch and
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the rear single storey extension that has been built. Based on the submitted drawings, the roof would have a prominent profile due to its height to incorporate living accommodation. While there are examples of large front roof slopes within the street, these predominantly belong to chalet style bungalows, which are of lower height than the appeal proposal would be. The nearby two storey dwellings, particularly those opposite, have much shallower pitched roofs and, therefore, the roof height is proportionate to the overall design. In contrast, the changes to the appeal property would result in a disproportionate and dominant roof form.

7. The predominant roof forms in Vowler Road are pitched with gable ends and hipped roofs. There are no visible examples of dwellings with half-hipped roofs as proposed here. Consequently, the design of the roof combined with its extent and overall profile would give it an incongruous and uncharacteristic appearance, which would be unduly prominent within the street scene.
8. The rear of properties in this part of the street are also varied in appearance and design. There are examples of dormer windows to the sides and rear of neighbouring properties, but these are positioned on one and a half storey chalet bungalows. The appeal proposal involves a much more prominent dormer in terms of the overall height of the property and the size of the dormer itself. Its height, filling much of the large rear roof slope, would give the property a top heavy appearance, while the much larger fenestration than the first floor windows would add to this unbalancing effect on the proportions of the rear elevation. While the dormer would not be visible from the public realm it would be seen from neighbouring rear gardens, from which views its incongruous appearance would be readily apparent.
9. No 44 has a large dormer in an elevated position compared to its neighbours, but this single example on the opposite side of the road does not in my view provide a positive precedent that overcomes the above findings. While roof alterations are possible under permitted development rights, there is no detailed evidence of how this might relate to the current proposals. I accept that the proposal would result in the creation of a larger family home that would be more environmentally sustainable, using appropriate materials. Nonetheless, while I have had full regard to these benefits, they do not outweigh the harm resulting from the built form of the extended dwelling proposed in this location.
10. Therefore, for these reasons, I conclude that the proposed additional floor and dormer window would have a materially harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. Consequently, it is contrary to Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies, as described. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which promotes good design.

Other Matters

11. I acknowledge that the appellant may be frustrated by the process leading to the Council's decision in this case. However, this matter is not within the scope of this appeal, which concerns the planning merits of the proposal.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the appeal should not succeed.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR