The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2024

by Juliet Rogers BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/D/23/3327118
40 Merridale Road, City of Southampton SO19 7AD

- 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 E Dollapi against the decision of Southampton City Council.
- The application Ref 23/00499/FUL, dated 11 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2023.
- The development proposed is a loft conversion with a front dormer, 1.5-storey rear extension and elevational alterations.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion with a front dormer, 1.5-storey rear extension and elevational alterations at 40 Merridale Road, City of Southampton, SO19 7AD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/00499/FUL, dated 11 April 2023, subject to the following conditions:

   1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

   2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan:

      - Drawing Ref: 3042/03_01_rev B – Proposed Alterations

   3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Preliminary Matters

2. During the appeal, a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) came into effect. However, the Framework's policy content insofar as it relates to the main issue in this case has not been significantly changed. Therefore, there is no requirement for me to seek further submissions on the new Framework version. I am satisfied no party would be prejudiced by determining the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Comprising a single-storey detached bungalow, the appeal site is located within a predominately residential area. A wide variety of roofscapes, including different ridge heights, ridgeline forms and rearwards projections are evident in the street scene. Many properties have been extended with loft conversions, additional front dormer windows and rear extensions, particularly along the same side of the road as the site. Despite this variety, bay windows with gable roof projections positioned on either side of central entrances are dominant features in the street scene, including on the existing bungalow's façade.

5. The proposed development comprises alterations to the roof including raising its height and replacing the flat ridgeline currently visible on the front elevation with an apex. This change of roof shape is not dissimilar to many others within the street. The roof pitch of the front dormer would reflect the angle of the existing roofline and the projected gable roof bay windows whilst its central position on the roof maintains the symmetry of the bungalow's façade. Consequently, the proposed alterations would maintain the prominence of the rhythm created by the gable roof projections in the street scene.

6. The proposed rear extension and loft conversion would provide a significant increase in floor space in comparison with the existing property. However, it would not extend beyond the rear building line of neighbouring properties, nor comprise a substantially larger footprint. Furthermore, the subservience of the roofscape to the façade and ground floor accommodation would be maintained by the rearward emphasis of the proposed upper floor and the angle of the roof. Therefore, the bulk and scale of the proposed development would not dominate the appearance of the bungalow.

7. I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area and would accord with Policy CS13 of the LDF Core Strategy[1] and Saved Policies SDP7 and SDP9 of the Local Plan Review[2]. These policies, amongst other provisions, require development to respect its surroundings and integrate into its community in terms of its scale, massing, and visual impact. Additionally, as the proposed development would not dominate the appearance of the existing property and maintain its balance and proportion, it accords with the Design Guide[3]. I find no conflict with Chapter 12 of the Framework which requires development to be sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

8. Although the Council refer to Saved Policy SDP1 of the Local Plan Review on the decision notice, as this relates to the health, safety and amenity of the city's citizens, it is not determinative in this main issue.

Conditions

9. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that development is carried out as per the approved plans, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty.

[1] Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document – amended version incorporating the Core Strategy Partial Review March 2015 (the LDF Core Strategy)
[2] City of Southampton Local Plan Review – adopted version second revision (the Local Plan Review)
[3] Southampton City Council Residential Design Guide (the Design Guide)

10. I have also imposed a condition requiring the use of materials to match those used in the existing property, in the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the area.

11. As the only windows proposed in the side elevation of the proposed development would be positioned in the roof slopes, any loss of privacy experienced by neighbouring or future occupiers would be negligible. Therefore, I do not need to impose a condition requiring the use of obscured glazing in these windows.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

Juliet Rogers

INSPECTOR