
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2024

by C Carpenter BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/R3515/D/23/3332130

69 Leopold Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 4RP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr C Fitch-Jackson against the decision of Ipswich Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is IP/23/00470/FUL.
 - The development proposed is removal of hipped roof and replacement with gabled pitch roof with rear box dormer including Juliet balcony and front rooflights, and erection of single storey side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Section E of the appeal form states the description used on the original application form was changed by the Council with the agreement of the appellant. The application was determined on that basis. I have therefore used the description on the Council's decision notice in the heading above.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was updated in December 2023, during the course of this appeal. However, insofar as the contents are relevant to this appeal, the Framework has not changed. Therefore, I am satisfied no party would be disadvantaged by not having the opportunity to comment on the revised Framework.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. 69 Leopold Road is a detached two-storey house of traditional appearance with a hip roof, two-storey bay window under a projecting gable and an arched brick porch. It is one of several detached and semi-detached houses of similar design in this part of Leopold Road. Together these houses contribute to the street's generally consistent suburban character, notwithstanding the presence of some other housing styles. According to the Ipswich Urban Characterisation Study, this dwelling type is also characteristic of the wider 'Colchester Road' character sub area of Northeast Ipswich, where hipped roof forms add to the sense of a generous, spacious layout.

6. The proposed remodelling of the roof would result in a new ridge line materially and visibly higher than both the tops of nearby hip roofs and the ridge lines of other gable roofs in Leopold Road. This increased height in combination with the change in roof form would make the appearance of No 69 stand out in the street scene, in contrast to the other houses of similar design nearby. The new roof would also appear to dominate the host dwelling when viewed alongside other houses of similar dimensions in the street. This would erode the generally consistent and spacious suburban character of this part of Leopold Road and the Colchester Road character sub area of which it is a part.
7. I understand there is a previous permission for the appeal site¹, which involves replacement of the hip roof with a gable roof. I do not have all the details of that permission before me, so I cannot be certain of the roof pitch or height previously approved. Whether or not the proposed roof pitch has increased since that permission, the appeal scheme before me would result in an incongruously higher and deeper gable roof than others in the area. This would detract from the character of the neighbourhood for the reasons given.
8. I acknowledge the houses at 70 and 87 Leopold Road have gable roofs but are in other respects of a similar design to No 69, albeit without projecting gables. However, the ridge height of those houses is in keeping with the rest of the street, so those roofs do not appear dominant or incongruous like the one proposed in the appeal scheme.
9. The proposed rear dormer would be very wide and deep relative to the new roof and would be set only just below the new ridge line. This would further dominate the appearance of the host dwelling when viewed from its back garden and those of neighbouring dwellings. The use of matching materials would do little to mitigate the size of the dormer and its harmful visual impact. There is little to substantiate the suggestion that the Council indicated support for the proposed dormer design prior to submission of the application. In any event, I am required to consider the proposal before me on its merits, and the evidence of pre-application engagement does not alter my finding on the detrimental effect of the dormer.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. This is contrary to Policy DM16 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), which requires extensions or alterations to existing dwellings to respect the character, scale and design of the existing dwelling and the established townscape of the surrounding area. It is also contrary to the Ipswich Space & Design Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document, which expects roof extensions to be well proportioned and sympathetic to the roof of the original dwelling, and roof dormers not to over dominate the host roof.
11. It is also contrary to the Framework, which seeks good design and development that is sympathetic to local character, taking account of local design guidance.

¹ Application reference IP/22/00586/FUL

Conclusion

12. I have found the proposal conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole. No other material considerations, including the Framework, have been shown to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Carpenter

INSPECTOR