
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2024

by Elaine Benson BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/23/3332789

10 Vicarage Lane, North Weald Bassett, Epping, Essex CM16 6ET

- 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 Kenny Ross against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/1597/23, dated 12 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is a two hip to gable conversion, complete with clipped hip to top junction. Rear catslide dormer to facilitate new first floor bedrooms and associated bathroom/en-suite.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Vicarage Lane can be characterised as predominantly containing large 1930s detached bungalows and houses, with a wide variety of designs. Many of the properties have been extended at the rear and into the roof. The appeal property (No 10) is typical of the area and has pitched roof ground floor extensions, including a large conservatory. A hip-to-gable conversion and rear dormer are now proposed to provide accommodation at first floor level.
4. The bulk of the roof addition would be within the hip-to-gable alteration. Although this would be set behind the existing front additions, I am not convinced that it would be recessive in the street scene, as the appellant suggests. It would not appear balanced, but rather as a bulky and incongruous addition to the street scene and therefore inappropriate in its context. As a whole, the proposal would result in a building with a number of different roof angles and roof slopes which would have an uncoordinated and incoherent appearance. As No 10 is on a corner plot, its incongruous and discordant design would be prominent in views from the front, side and rear.
5. There is great design variety in the surrounding area and there is consequently scope for innovative design approaches. However, to comply with the design policies set out in the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 (2023) (the Local Plan) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the

design of new development should be of high quality. The Framework is clear that poor design should be refused. The appellant refers to roof additions in the locality, some of which are described as 'crude' or 'relating very poorly to the host dwelling'. The evidence indicates that some were constructed under permitted development rights and others under the provisions of an earlier Local Plan. Nonetheless, whilst I do not have the full details of these examples, the presence of poor design quality in the locality is not a good justification for allowing further harmful development.

6. It appears to me that there is ample scope for the family's need for additional accommodation to be achieved by more appropriate development than is shown in this proposal. I note that there is support from the occupiers of 9 Vicarage Lane who were consulted during the design process. Nonetheless, local support does not overcome the harm that has been identified above. Similarly, the objection of the North Weald Bassett Parish Council has been taken into account in this decision but is also not determinative. Concerns about the lack of communication with the Council during the determination of the planning application are more appropriately addressed by the Council's internal procedures.
7. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposed development would be incongruous, highly prominent and an overly dominant development which would harm the character and appearance of No 10 and the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies DM9 and DM10 of the Local Plan and the Framework. In summary, these policies and guidance seek to ensure that new development is of high-quality design and that it respects the character and appearance of its setting.
8. For the reasons identified, the appeal is dismissed.

Elaine Benson

INSPECTOR