

Appeal Decision

Site visit made 6 March 2024

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/23/3333229

122 Wennington Road, Havering, Rainham, RM13 9DG

- 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 Mrs Paulette Coulson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1289.23, dated 19 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 23 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is a change of roof profile from hip to gable, two front and one rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a change of roof profile from hip to gable, two front and one rear dormer at 122 Wennington Road, Havering, Rainham, RM13 9DG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P1289.23, dated 19 August 2023, and the plans submitted with it.

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the two front dormers and single rear dormer on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene of Wennington Road and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a traditional detached house on a generous plot. It has a two storey front bay and a single storey rear extension. The house originally had a hipped roof and a hipped roof over the bay. However, at the time of my site visit the proposed development had been completed and the roof over the bay removed to leave a flat top. The dwelling is set on a busy, mainly residential street that comprises dwellings of different age and design, including detached, semi-detached and terraced houses and some bungalows. There is thus little uniformity in the street scene.
 4. The Council has issued a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) confirming that a hip to gable roof conversion with front rooflights and a smaller rear dormer to the one proposed is permitted development.
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5. The two front dormers are modest in size. They are well spaced and in combination occupy less than half the width of the existing roof. Each dormer is about 1.2m wide and approximately 1.5m high. They are clearly set within the roof slope. To this extent they would be in general conformity with the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 2011. However, the SPD advises that dormers facing the highway should normally have pitched roofs. The appeal dormers have flat tops. I did not see any other flat topped front dormers in this part of Wennington Road although a bungalow in nearby Venette Close which can be seen from Wennington Road does have flat-topped dormers that are prominent in the street scene. Nevertheless, they are not characteristic of the area. To this extent they would therefore fail to comply with the SPD.
6. Conversely, the flat-topped dormers would be more in keeping with the flat-topped bay at the appeal dwelling, which is shown on the LDC approved plan, than pitched roofs. In consequence, they would be sympathetic to the design of the dwelling as altered and since the alteration is permitted development this would be retained regardless of the outcome of this appeal. Moreover, since the dwelling is unlike other detached dwellings nearby and the permitted alterations only serve to emphasise that difference, and in view of the limited uniformity of design in the street, the dormers would not appear unsympathetic or otherwise out of place. A departure from the SPD advice is therefore justified.
7. Turning to the rear dormer, this has been built across the full width of the altered gable roof such that the side walls of the dwelling form the cheeks of the dormer. I saw only one other example of a similar hip to gable and rear dormer alteration in the vicinity of the appeal dwelling and therefore, whilst traditional gable ends are prevalent, I do not consider this roof form to be characteristic of the area. Nevertheless, the proximity of the dwelling to No 120 and the limited angle of view between the dwelling and No 124 mean that the high side walls would not be prominent in the street scene. In consequence, I agree with the Council that, despite the increase in the bulk and mass of the roof, when viewed from the street the proposed arrangement would not appear unduly out of place.
8. When viewed from the rear, the dormer appears large. It is, however, clearly set up from the eaves and below the ridge. In addition, the brickwork forming the dormer cheeks has been painted in a pale colour to match the gable ends, while the bulk of the rear elevation of the dormer is clad in dark, horizontal panels. This provides a clear distinction between the dormer and the gable walls and although the impression of a set-in is an illusion, if allowed to remain it would serve to limit the apparent width of the dormer. Moreover, other large box dormers are visible on other dwellings nearby such that the form is not incongruous in the area.
9. The existing single storey rear extension would ensure that the increased bulk at roof level is visually balanced by the additional bulk at ground floor, such that the dormer did not overwhelm the rear elevation. Moreover, it would provide a step in the rear elevation which would limit the impression of the dormer looming over the rear of the house and its garden, thus ensuring that it would not have an overbearing effect. Although clearly visible from neighbouring properties, the separation of the dormer from them, its containment within the

original footprint of the dwelling and the spaciousness of plots in the vicinity would prevent any overbearing effect on nearby occupiers.

10. Overall, notwithstanding that the rear dormer would be large and not set in from the side eaves but having regard to the extensions and alterations approved under the LDC, I conclude on the main issue that the two front and single rear dormers would have no materially detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene of Wennington Road or the surrounding area. In consequence, there would be no conflict with Policies 7 and 26 of the Havering Local Plan 2016-2031, adopted 2021. Taken together and amongst other things these expect residential development to be of a high design quality that is inclusive and provides an attractive, safe and accessible living environment whilst ensuring that the amenity and quality of life of existing and future residents is not adversely impacted.
11. Turning to conditions, since the development has been completed, a statutory commencement condition is not necessary and neither is a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans or in matching materials. I agree with the Council that neither are any other conditions necessary.
12. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR