



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2024

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X2410/W/23/3324600

66 Central Avenue, Syston, Leicester, Leicestershire LE7 2EE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Amaritjot Singh against Charnwood Borough Council.
 - The application reference is P/22/2225/2.
 - The development proposed is the construction of dormers to the front and rear of the house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission for the construction of dormers to the front and rear of the house is refused.

Background and Main Issue

2. The Council had not determined the planning application prior to the appeal being lodged. Its appeal statement indicated that it considered the proposed dormers would be unsympathetic additions to the appeal property, and it would have refused planning permission.
3. The main issue is therefore the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. No 66 Central Avenue is a two-storey semi-detached house, in a residential area close to Syston town centre. The proposed development is the erection of dormers on the front and rear roof slopes, to facilitate the provision of a second floor of living accommodation within what is currently loft space.
5. The Council's 2020 Design Supplementary Planning Document ("the SPD") advises that unless there are existing dormers in the area, new dormers are likely to be out of character with their surroundings. I saw on my site visit that, while there are several distinct groupings of house types on Central Avenue, apart from a single bungalow towards the western end of the street, none feature front dormers. I did not enter the appeal site, but saw glimpses of the rear of dwellings at numerous points while walking round the area; based on these views I consider that rear dormers, while not totally absent, are also few and far between in the locality. The area is not therefore one characterised by dormers, so they would be an incongruous addition to the appeal property.
6. The SPD also advises that, where dormers are to be used, they should be as small as possible, and should match the existing windows on the house. While the front dormer would not be excessively large in itself, its window would be larger than, and not aligned with, the existing window and door openings

below. This would give the dwelling's street frontage an awkward and disjointed appearance. At the rear, the proposed dormer would occupy almost the whole of the roof slope, making it a bulky and dominant addition to the building. Even if I had therefore found that dormers may be acceptable in principle, the detailed form of those proposed here would be detrimental to the quality of the host building and the wider streetscene.

7. The appellant provided decision notices granting planning permission for dormers at Nos 23 and 73 Central Avenue (respectively LPA Ref: 80/3041/2 dated 24 November 1980, and LPA Ref: P/00/0608/2 dated 18 July 2000), but no further details were given. The front dormer at No 23 is the "exception" described in paragraph 5 above; in my view it is a bulky and intrusive, rather than sympathetic or attractive, addition to that property. The side of the rear dormer at No 73 could be seen from the junction of Central Avenue and East Avenue in a gap between buildings; the view suggested that it occupies less of the rear roof slope than would be the case here. Both were permitted long before the adoption of the current development plan documents or the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework"), and neither carries significant weight in favour of the appeal scheme.
8. I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Saved Policies EV/1 and H/17 of the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan, Policy CS2 of the 2015 Charnwood Core Strategy, and Draft Policy DS5 of the emerging Charnwood Local Plan 2021-37. Together, and among other things, those policies seek to ensure that development, including residential extensions, is designed to a high standard, respects and enhances the character of the area, and is not visually intrusive or incongruous (though I note that the Local Plan 2021-37 has not yet been adopted). There would also be conflict with the provisions of the Framework in respect of achieving well-designed and beautiful places, notably paragraphs 135 and 139 which seek to ensure that development is visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, and reflects local design guidance.

Other Matters

9. The Council considered that the proposed development would not be significantly harmful to neighbours' living conditions, highway safety, or in any other respect. None of the evidence before me, including what I saw during my site visit, leads me to disagree with that view. However, a lack of harm in these respects is a neutral factor which does not negate or outweigh the other harm I have found.

Conclusion

10. There are no material considerations, including those of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector