



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 May 2024

by R Cahalane BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/D/23/3329071

76 Lime Avenue, City of Southampton, Southampton, SO19 8NZ

- 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 & Mrs Garness against the decision of Southampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00506/FUL, dated 20 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 14 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is a first floor front dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. Notwithstanding the appellant names on the original application form, it has since been confirmed that the appeal has been made by Mr & Mrs Garness, as reflected in the banner heading above.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site (No. 76) fronts Lime Avenue, a long cul-de-sac in a leafy residential suburb of Southampton. Built form along Lime Avenue mainly comprises detached and semi-detached bungalows that are characterised by a common scale, proportions and design features, including pitched roofs and small front gables above bay windows.
5. Despite later alterations to some dwellings nearby, including the addition of front/side dormers and side hip-to-gable roof extensions, there is an overall consistency in the local built form and layout, as well as symmetry between semi-detached pairs, giving the surrounding area a coherent character and appearance.
6. No. 76 is one side of a semi-detached pair of bungalows that, together with the attached dwelling, 78 Lime Avenue (No. 78), follows a regular line of properties set back from Lime Avenue. No. 76 has accommodation in the roof with a full hip-to-gable side roof extension, along with a narrow single storey side extension with a hipped roof, and a flat roof rear dormer extension. No. 78 also features a box-like front dormer extension, with a flat roof set down slightly below the ridge and sited near to the shared party wall with No. 76. Despite

the various extensions and alterations, the pair retain an overall coherence, including front bay and gable features and materials, which are reflected in the wider street scene.

7. The appeal scheme proposes the addition of a flat roofed front dormer to facilitate additional first floor bedroom accommodation at No. 76. The flat roof of the proposed dormer would be lower than that at No. 78. It would also project slightly further forward, and be significantly wider by comparison. Although the proposal would achieve an additional bedroom internally, the proposed windows would fail to align with the existing pattern of fenestration, causing it to jar with the host dwelling, and appear further at odds and out of balance with its attached neighbour.
8. I note there are examples of flat roof dormers elsewhere along Lime Avenue. However, I observed during my site visit, along with some other similar examples along the street, that these are of generally modest size relative to the main dwelling roof forms, and many are also set further away from the road than the appeal proposal. While I do not know their planning history, I observed the front dormer at No. 45 to be fairly well-contained within the dwelling's roof form and of modest box-like proportions. The front dormer at No. 80 is large, however, it is a detached dwelling occupying a noticeably wider plot and building frontage at the cul-de-sac end. Not only would the width of the proposed front dormer cover most of the host dwelling's existing front roof slope, it would also be disproportionately wider than the other front dormers in the vicinity along Lime Avenue, including those at No. 80 and No. 45.
9. The proposed dormer would not block any view. However, the undulating road levels means that it would be visible towards the end of the cul-de-sac at considerable distance away from its immediate frontage. Whilst noting that the proposed dormer has been designed by an architect and to satisfy current fire and safety regulations, its overall scale, form and detailed design would cause it to stand out as an uncharacteristic and alien addition that would fail to reflect the existing host dwelling and the wider street scene.
10. Overall, I find that the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. It is therefore contrary to saved Policies SDP1, SDP7 and SDP9 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (2015), and Policy CS13 of the of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2015). These policies require, amongst other things, development to respect the scale and proportion of existing buildings and their surroundings. The proposal also fails to satisfy the guidance in Section 2.5 of the Council's Residential Design Guide (2006), insofar as it requires dormer additions to not create a negative visual impact. Conflict also arises with the National Planning Policy Framework (revised 2023), particularly policies that seek to ensure developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, and sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

Other Matters

11. The appellants also provided photographs of other front dormer extensions to dwellings within various streets in the Sholing area. These examples are, however, of varying size and design to the appeal dwelling, and are therefore not directly comparable to the appeal proposal before me, which has been decided on its own merits and site-specific circumstances.

12. The case has been put that the proposed development would provide additional space for the appellants' growing family, including the provision of all bedrooms on one floor, as well as access to an allotment from the garden. While improvements to the property may have been made with the intention of it becoming a more practical 'forever home', I have not been given demonstrable evidence to indicate that the appeal scheme is the only or least harmful way of satisfying the changing need for space and interests of the children. The benefits of the proposed development to the appellants' family are weighed against other material considerations, including relevant local and national planning policies related to character and appearance, and the wider public interest. I therefore consider that the harm that would be caused by the proposed development clearly outweighs the needs of or benefits to the appellants, and it is proportionate in the circumstances to dismiss the appeal.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Cahalane

INSPECTOR