



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 May 2024

by A Knight BA PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/23/3333781

46 Copperfields, High Wycombe HP12 4AN

- 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 Morris against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/06551/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the formation of habitable room in roofspace with rear dormer and front velux roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the local area; and
 - the living conditions of neighbouring properties with regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Copperfields is characterised by a mix of residential development that, whilst not historic in age, incorporates distinctly traditional features.
4. Modest, single gable dormers are common in the local area on both front and rear roof slopes. They are generally no larger than required to house an individual window frame, occupy a small proportion of the host roof, and have generous spaces between them. The consistency in the scale and design of local dormers make them characteristic of the area, and a positive contributor to its character and appearance.
5. The appeal property is the northernmost in a terrace of three, neighboured by homes to the immediate side and rear in a horseshoe configuration. The rear of the appeal site is not readily visible from the public highway, but is prominent when viewed from neighbouring homes and gardens.
6. The proposed development includes a rear roof extension arranged as two gable dormers with a central, connecting box-section. Due to its size, the proposed extension would cover a significant proportion of the rear roof-slope, resulting in a bulky, disproportionate addition to the rear elevation that would both dominate and harm the appearance of the house.

7. The design of the extension attempts to reflect the many small individual gable dormers in the area, but would nevertheless appear as one, larger extension, at odds with the size, scale and design of typical nearby dormers. As a result, the proposal would be markedly out of character with the local area.
8. For the above reasons, I conclude that the rear dormer would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, and on the local area. This is contrary to Policies CP9, DM35 and DM36 of the Adopted Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019 (the Local Plan)), which require proposals to achieve a high quality of design detail, respect the character and appearance of (and be subservient in scale to) the host dwelling, and to respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Living conditions

9. The proposed extension would provide habitable room windows at a higher level than in any neighbouring property, and the appeal site sits on higher ground than several of its neighbours to the rear. These two factors would combine to create a new, more intrusive angle of vision from the proposed windows, allowing more comprehensive overlooking of neighbouring homes to the rear, especially the rear gardens and back windows of 66, 68 and 70 Copperfields.
10. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of neighbouring properties, with regard to privacy. It would therefore be contrary to Policy DM36 of the Local Plan, which aims to preserve the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

11. I appreciate that the appellant has obtained consent for the proposal from the National Trust as required by the terms of a restrictive covenant, and that revising the proposal, should the appellant choose to do so, will incur additional costs and waiting times to those associated with the planning process. Nevertheless, I must assess the proposal on its planning merits and, as set out above, I have found it to be unacceptable.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

A Knight

INSPECTOR