
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2024

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/24/3342750

43 Heather Drive, Havering, Romford, RM1 4SP

- 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 and Mrs G Ahadi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref. P0065.24, dated 11 January 2024, was refused by notice dated 7 March 2024.
 - The development proposed is front dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The address of the appeal site differs on the submitted planning application and appeal forms. I have used that given on the application form in the banner heading above, as it is not obviously misleading or incorrect.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property, the street scene, and the locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached dwelling located towards the end of the cul-de-sac of Heather Drive. Most properties in the road comprise single-storey semi-detached dwellings of similar original design and form, and although detached, the appeal property reflects this style. Many of these dwellings have added rooms in the roof space, and there are a range of rooflights and dormer windows visible in the street scene.
5. Although roof alterations are prevalent in the vicinity, front dormer windows are generally small, with pitched roofs. There is one example of a design and scale not dissimilar to the appeal proposal, but this is the exception and is not reflective of the general style within Heather Drive, where flat-roofed dormer windows are largely confined to rear roof slopes.
6. In accordance with the design aims set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), Policy 26 of the Havering Local Plan 2016 – 2031

(adopted 2021) [LP] seeks high quality design proposals which, amongst other criteria, respect, reinforce and complement the local street scene, and respond to distinctive local building forms and established scale and massing. This is supported by guidance in the Council's 'Residential Extensions and Alterations' Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (SPD), which specifies that a dormer facing the highway should be no greater in width than 1.2m, and its width should not exceed the height. The SPD notes that, where a larger window area is required, two smaller dormers with pitched roofs should be provided, suitably spaced apart, to minimise the apparent bulk of the additions.

7. The size of the proposed dormer window would exceed by some margin the Council's guidelines, which are aimed at preventing harm to the original house and street scene. Although it would occupy less than half of the front roof slope, it would nevertheless appear as a dominant and bulky addition to the property, with the adverse visual impact exacerbated by the flat-roofed design and awkward link to the bay window roof below. Given its prominence on the front roof slope, it would appear as an incongruous addition to the property that would detract from the street scene.
8. As noted above, I am mindful of a similar dormer window in Heather Drive, but this is not typical of the style or scale of dormer window in the vicinity. The appellants have drawn attention to other examples in Mashiters Hill, William Close and beyond, but these appear to be roads of more varied house styles than Heather Drive. Although there are examples of large flat roofed dormers in these areas, some are more successfully integrated in the street scene than others, and their presence would not justify acceptance of the appeal proposal. Moreover, no information has been provided regarding the planning permissions granted for those extensions, or whether they were assessed against the same planning policies and guidance now in place. As such, they offer limited weight to the proposal.
9. I appreciate the benefits to the appellants of the increased space created by the proposal, and the stated need. I also accept that the proposal would not adversely affect neighbouring residents. However, these factors would not outweigh the visual harm of securing these improvements in the design and form proposed. In their appeal statement, the appellants suggested a reduction in the size of the dormer window, but there is no scope to make such amendments as part of a householder planning appeal, and as such I have not taken this into account.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, the street scene and locality, in conflict with the design aims of the Framework, LP Policy 26 and the guidance in the SPD.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR