



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 August 2024

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/24/3339457

50A Leverstock Green Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 8PR

- 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 Maureen Hajanga against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01845/FHA.
 - The development proposed is erection of rear dormer roof extension, three rooflights to the front and alterations to height of the roof to facilitate a loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of rear dormer roof extension, three rooflights to the front and alterations to the height of the roof to facilitate a loft conversion at 50A Leverstock Green Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 8PR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/01845/FHA, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 4D-414: -E00; -E01; -P01; -E02; -P02; -E03; -P03; -E04; -P04; -E05; -P05; -E06; -P06; -E07; -P07.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issues

2. There are two main issues. Firstly, the effect of the proposed loft conversion on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene and the surrounding area; and secondly, the effect of the proposed extension on highway safety with respect to parking provision.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a modern, two storey, detached house set on a well-established, quiet residential street accessed from a dual carriageway. The street comprises mostly post-war dwellings but some appear older. The appeal dwelling is one of a short row of similar dwellings on a staggered building line and on ground which rises up from the St Albans Road dual carriageway. However, other dwellings nearby include chalet bungalows and semi-detached

houses of different designs and heights, thus providing variety in the street scene. The street has a spacious, open character with open spaces, wide verges and front gardens.

4. The proposed loft conversion would involve an increase in the ridge height of the dwelling from 7.1m to 7.7m. This would be a relatively modest increase and in view of the staggered building line of the similar dwellings, the slope of the ground and the different ridge heights of other dwellings nearby I am satisfied that the difference between the ridge height of the appeal dwelling and its similar neighbours would not be unduly apparent and would not detract from the character or appearance of either the host dwelling or the street scene which is not uniform in either design or layout.
5. The development would also include a flat roofed dormer to the rear elevation. Owing to the staggered building line this would be visible from the street when approaching from the direction of St Albans Road. Nevertheless, its noticeable set in from the side eaves and set up from the rear eave would ensure that it did not overwhelm the rear roof slope of the dwelling or result in an unduly bulky or top heavy appearance. Its effect on the dwelling would therefore be satisfactory.
6. Although large dormers are not common in Leverstock Green Road and adjoining streets, a number are clearly visible, including one prominent example on a nearby dwelling in the same street view as the appeal dormer. In addition, box dormers are visible on the front elevations of chalet bungalows opposite the appeal dwelling. This form of development is not therefore alien in the area and the proposed dormer, on the rear of the appeal dwelling and only partially visible from the side, thus limiting its prominence in the street scene, would not be incompatible and would have a satisfactory effect on the character and appearance of the area.
7. It is concluded on the first main issue that the proposed loft conversion would have no materially detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the host dwelling or the street scene and surrounding area. In consequence, it would comply with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Council's Core Strategy 2006 – 2031 (CS), adopted 2013, and with the National Planning Policy Framework. Taken together and amongst other things, these expect new development to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, sympathetic to local character and respect adjoining properties in terms of scale, height and bulk.
8. Turning to parking provision, Policies CS8 and CS12 of the CS expect development to provide sufficient, safe and convenient parking, based on car parking standards (which are set out in the Dacorum Borough Council Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 2020). The application of those standards will, amongst other things, take account of the accessibility of the location and highway safety. The SPD expects dwellings with four bedrooms to provide three parking spaces, with more than four bedroom dwellings being assessed on an individual basis. The proposed loft conversion would add one bedroom, resulting in a five bedroom dwelling. In my view, no more than four spaces could therefore be expected.
9. I agree with the appellant that, on the basis of the evidence including my site visit, the frontage of the dwelling would readily accommodate three cars, possibly more. Moreover, although the dwelling lies within accessibility Zone 3 (least accessible) I note that it lies in an urban setting, close to a bus route and

within walking or cycling distance of local shops and amenities, thus providing an alternative to transport by private car for some journeys. In addition, there is ample, unrestricted street parking on Leverstock Green Road that could accommodate visitor parking without any material harm to highway safety. I therefore consider that, notwithstanding the lack of submitted parking surveys, the SPD standard would be met by the three to four on-site spaces which would be sufficient in this case. There would thus be no material conflict with the SPD.

10. The Council points out that planning permission has recently been granted for a one bedroom "granny" annexe at the appeal dwelling. This has not been implemented but is extant and would increase the number of bedrooms at the site from the existing four to five. It is suggested that this would add to parking demand. However, I have no evidence that the Council was concerned regarding this matter at the time of that planning application and this argument therefore carries limited weight. The Council also suggests that the site's location, close to a main road would be a material consideration. However, in terms of parking provision, the main road has no impact on the appeal site and negligible impact on street parking in Leverstock Green Road.
11. It is concluded on the second main issue that the proposed loft conversion would have no materially harmful effect on highway safety with respect to parking provision. In consequence, it would comply with CS Policies CS8 and CS12.
12. The Council suggests two conditions in addition to the statutory commencement condition. I agree that the development should be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans and also that materials to match the existing dwelling should be used. These are necessary for the avoidance of doubt and to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.
13. 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