



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2024

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/24/3347289

25 The Ridgeway, Westcliff-on-Sea, Southend-on-Sea, SS0 8NS

- 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 P Harding against the decision of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00324/FULH.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing main roof and two-storey side extension roof. Proposed replacement half hip roof to form habitable accommodation in the loft space with rear dormer, front Velux windows, and new west-facing side window. Demolition of chimney stacks.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but as the parties have not provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling, the street scene and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached house located in a residential area, comprising dwellings mostly from the same construction period. As such, they appear cohesive as a result of shared designs, detailing and materials. In particular, hipped roofs predominate, with most dwellings having a lower gabled or hipped front wing. Many dwellings have been extended but, for the most part, the original design and form of the host house remains discernible. Despite some buildings being built up to their side boundaries, there is a sense of space between properties as a result of gaps at first-floor level, and/or their hipped roofs sloping away from shared boundaries.
5. The appeal property has a two-storey side extension with a 'crown' roof, but with a height that is subservient to the original dwelling. Although built up to

- one side boundary, the low height and roof sloping away from the boundary contributes to the spacing in the street scene.
6. The proposed roof extension would materially alter the form of the original dwelling, and I do not share the appellant's view that it would be a sympathetic design that would harmonise well with the original and adjoining properties. As a result of the significant increase in roof massing, I consider that it would appear as a bulky, 'top heavy' and dominant addition that would be highly visible in the street scene. A crown roof spanning much of the property width would be out of keeping with the more traditional form of the host house and others which prevail in the area. The modest side hips would have limited impact in reducing the perceived bulk of the roof, and would not preserve upper floor spacing to neighbouring dwellings. I am not convinced that they would provide the clear physical and visual breaks suggested by the appellant.
 7. This would be in conflict with Policy DM3 of the Southend Development Management Document 2015 (DMD), which amongst other criteria, requires building alterations and additions to make a positive contribution to the character of the original building and the surrounding area through the use of detailing that draws reference from the original building, and ensures successful integration with it.
 8. Although the proposed rear dormer window may not be visible in the street scene, its large size would contribute to the excessive massing of the resultant dwelling. Considered as part of the wider roof extension, the proposal would not be of a scale that is respectful and subservient to that of the original building, as required by DMD Policy DM3. This is reinforced by the Design and Townscape Guide 2009 (DTG), which advises that roof extensions must respect the style, scale and form of the existing roof design and the character of the wider townscape, and that large box-style dormer windows should be avoided.
 9. There are some rear, and side, dormer windows within the vicinity, but it is not evident from the information provided in this appeal that they all required or received express planning permission. Whilst I note the appellant's view that other hip-to-gable roof extensions and dormer windows are likely to be constructed as Permitted Development (PD) in the area, there is no evidence supplied to indicate that any are proposed, nor the scale of what could be constructed as PD. As such, this potential does not offer a realistic fallback position. I have based my assessment on the current character and appearance of the area as viewed at the site visit.
 10. The appellant has referred to developments at 17, 21 and 29 The Ridgeway. The roof designs at Nos.17 & 21 appear to be traditional ridges, with the former having a rear dormer window (which the appellant advises was added as PD). Both appear to have greater upper floor separation from neighbouring buildings than proposed at this site. There are some design similarities with No.29, but the width of its roof extension appears to be materially less than proposed in this case, and the gap above its single-storey side element provides space between buildings. Although complex, it is not obvious that it is a crown roof; the Council's report advises that there are no examples of crown roofs within the vicinity of the site. As such, I do not find these examples to be directly comparable to the appeal proposal, and they therefore offer limited support.

11. I appreciate the benefits to the appellant's family of increasing residential living space without compromising on the amenity space of the dwelling. However, in the form proposed, this benefit would be outweighed by the visual harm identified above.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, the street scene and the wider area. It would conflict with Southend Core Strategy 2007 Policy CP4, which seeks to secure a high quality urban environment; and with DMD Policies DM3 and DM1, which amongst other criteria requires development to add to the overall quality of the area and to respect the character of the site, its local context and surroundings in matters including architectural approach, height, size, scale, form, massing, proportions, and detailed design features; and with guidance in the DTG.
13. For the same reasons, the proposal would be at odds with the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework, as supported by the National Design Guide, to ensure that developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.
14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR