
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/24/3350228

48 Clifford Road, Thurrock RM16 6NY

- 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 Arturas Dirzinauskas against the decision of Thurrock Council.
 - The application reference is 24/00489/HHA.
 - The proposed development is for a loft conversion with dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounds.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling on Clifford Road, in an estate of other domestic properties comprising mainly detached and semi-detached houses of generally similar scale and design.
 4. At my visit I observed that the rear roof slope of the appeal residence is visible from the public domain when viewed from Clifford Road between nos. 54 and 56. As such, the middle column of Table 1: Dormer Windows and Roof-Lights in the Thurrock Design Guide Residential Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2017 (SPD) is of relevance.
 5. The advice sets out that dormer windows in these locations may be acceptable subject to size restrictions, namely that such elements should not occupy more than one half of the width of the roof, and that the maximum width of an individual dormer is 2 metres. The top of dormer window should be at least 0.3m below the roof ridge, and no plane of a dormer should be within 0.6m of a hip line or verge.
 6. The scale of the appeal proposal would run contrary to much of this advice, being more than one half of the width of the roof slope, exceeding 2 metres in width and with the top of the dormer being almost flush with the main ridge line of the dwelling. Given that the SPD guidelines are standards which are intended to act as a benchmark for high design quality, in my view any violation is unlikely to be appropriate, particularly in this neighbourhood where few other roof alterations exist.
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7. Consequently, the scheme conflicts with the standards; I consider that the overall size and proximity to the ridge line of the scheme would appear dominant and be harmful to the character of the dwelling and locality.
8. The appellant contends that the Council has incorrectly used the “visible but less prominent side roof” section of the SPD guidance. Whilst I acknowledge that the middle diagram on page 41 only uses the words “side roof”, Table 1 on page 40 uses the words “side *or rear* roof slope” (my emphasis), and therefore I am satisfied that the requirements therein would relate to this development.
9. I observed the other dormer window at 3 Boleyn Close referenced by the appellant, however this is the only one evident in the neighbourhood and to my mind should not represent the standard against which future development should be set. In any event, development at other houses would be neutral considerations in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.
10. I find that the rear dormer would be injurious to the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounds, which would conflict with Policies PMD2 and CSTP22 of the Thurrock Core Strategy and the SPD. Together these require schemes to respond to and respect the character of the area, to provide a high quality of design, and ensure the form and scale of extensions is appropriate to the original dwelling and the surrounding development pattern. It would also be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to my reasoning and all other matters, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR