



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 April 2025

by **H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/24/3357652

Glenview, 56 London Road, Lambourne, Romford, RM4 1UX

- 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 Alwayne Powell against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/1725/24.
 - The development proposed is construction of first floor rear extension, conversion of loft with front and rear dormers, alterations to the roof height.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The address of the appeal site varies between the submitted documents, with some giving the location as in 'Lambourne'¹ and others in 'Abridge'². I have used the address given at the 'site location' section of the submitted planning application form in the heading above.
3. Since the appeal was lodged, revisions have been published to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Having reviewed the changes, I am satisfied that they do not affect the substantive matters of the appeal, and that proceeding without seeking further comments from the parties would not be prejudicial to their cases.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two-storey house with a single-storey rear extension. Although the wider street scene is mixed in terms of building style and scale, the appeal property is part of two pairs of semi-detached properties of the same original design and form. Despite various alterations to these dwellings, the original architectural style remains evident, and is part of the character and appearance of the appeal property. Within the vicinity there are examples of loft conversions with rear dormer windows and front rooflights, but front dormer windows on two-storey

¹ Planning application form; the Council's decision notice; appellant's Planning Appeal Statement; and previous Prior Approval decision notice for application EPF/0473/23, supplied by the Council.

² Design and Access Statement; the appeal form; and the Council's questionnaire.

houses are not prevalent, and not as widely used as suggested in the submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS).

6. Amongst other criteria, Policy DM9 of Part One of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011 – 2033 (2023) (LP) requires residential extensions to respect and/or complement the form and detailing of the original building. Whilst I share the appellant's view that the extended building would be proportionate to the site, and that adequate outdoor space would be retained, the policy does not link the scale of a proposal to the overall site area, but to the original building itself. Equally, the policy does not support the Council's view that the proposal would constitute overdevelopment of the site.
7. Considered together, the proposed alterations would significantly alter the original form of the semi-detached house, and the cumulative scale would not respect the building. The increased height and front dormer window in particular would materially change the appearance of the property as part of a semi-detached pair. The existing front gable and two-storey flat roofed element contribute to the character and appearance of the dwelling. The introduction of the front dormer window close to both features and to the raised ridgeline, would create a cluttered façade that would undermine the original two-storey form of the house. I am not persuaded that these changes would integrate seamlessly with the original building.
8. Although the DAS advises that this stepped increased in height would be concealed when viewed from the ground by the front gable and that of the neighbouring property, this change to the appearance of the building would be more apparent in longer range views. I do not share the appellant's view that the proposal would enhance the aesthetic of the property and enrich the visual appeal of the street scene, although I accept that it would improve its functionality.
9. In isolation, the proposed first-floor rear extension would be reasonably modest in depth and height, and would complement the host dwelling. However, its appearance would be undermined by the size and scale of the proposed dormer window, built awkwardly around the extension roof below. Again, alongside the increased ridge height, the level of change proposed to the rear of the building would fail to respect its original form. The use of matching materials and detailing would not address the scale of development, which would not appear subservient to the host house, as suggested by the appellant.
10. Although not cited in the reason for refusal, I note the appellant's view that the proposal is in keeping with the evolving character of the street. I appreciate the mix of dwelling designs and extensions in the vicinity, but for the reasons outlined above the proposal would detract from the dwelling itself. The appellant has drawn attention to a number of permissions granted in the borough, although no information has been supplied of the reasoning behind those decisions. However, those cited appear to be materially different from the proposal in terms of design, and do not obviously include a raised roof height and front dormer. Approved loft conversions on two-storey dwellings appear to have been confined to rear dormer windows and rooflights, and did not therefore undermine the original façade of the host building. As such, these examples do not justify acceptance of the appeal proposal.

11. I appreciate that in order to meet current building standards, the existing roof may not be suitable for conversion without an increase in height. However, this factor would not justify the form and scale of the additions proposed.
12. The improved energy efficiency and reduction in environmental impact of the property, and upgrades to meet modern living standards, are benefits in favour of the proposal. It also seeks to optimize the use of the property, and to contribute to the enhancement of the usability and quality of the existing housing stock. However, it is not evident that these benefits may only be secured by a development of the scale and form proposed, with the consequent compromise to the character and appearance of the property. As such, these benefits would not justify acceptance of the appeal proposal.
13. The appellant has referred to anticipated changes to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015 to include the increase in ridge heights to homes. However, at present, this does not offer a 'fallback' position for the proposal, and as such offers little weight to the proposal.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, and would conflict with LP Policy DM9, and the objective to achieve well-designed places set out in the Framework. Although the appellant has placed weight on LP Policy DM10, I consider that its requirements offer limited support to the proposal, and does not alter the assessment above.
15. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR