
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 April 2025

by **E Grierson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/24/3355909

1 Cedar Rise, South Ockendon, Thurrock RM15 6RB

- 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 Atanas Dukov against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00990/HHA.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with the introduction of a side dormer to accommodate the staircase to loft.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration in my decision-making, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two storey, end of terrace dwelling in a residential location. The surrounding dwellings are varied in design but are largely two-stories in height, with gable roof forms being a common feature. Whilst dormer windows do not appear to be prevalent in the surrounding area, there are a number of gable design projections on surrounding dwellings, including the first floor bay window on the side elevation of the appeal property itself.
5. The proposed development would convert the loft of the host dwelling into an additional bedroom and bathroom and includes a dormer window on the side elevation, roof lights on the side elevation and a Juliet balcony to the rear. This application and the proposal before me was submitted to address the reasons for refusal of a previous planning application¹ for a similar development, although I will consider this scheme on its own merit.

¹ 24/00124/HHA (the previous planning application)

6. The front elevation of the host dwelling faces the small cul de sac road Cedar Rise and the unattached side elevation faces the adjacent road Sycamore Way. Sycamore Way is a larger, relatively busy thoroughfare and due to its location and close proximity to this road, the side elevation of the appeal property holds a prominent position in the streetscene.
7. This side elevation currently features the front door framed by an open porch at ground floor level and the aforementioned bay window on the first floor. Both of these features are gable ended projections. The proposed dormer window at roof level would introduce a third gable projection to this side elevation which, due to the location, would be a highly visible addition in the streetscene. The proposed rooflights would also be located on this elevation and would be visible in the public realm.
8. The three projections on this side elevation would be unaligned, with differing sizes and designs. This would result in an elevation which would appear disjointed and overly cluttered, appearing particularly incongruous when compared to the simple gable roof forms in the surrounding area. This would be further exacerbated by the prominent positioning of the side elevation in the streetscene, resulting in not only harm to the host dwelling but also to the wider area. Furthermore, whilst relatively modest additions in isolation, the proposed rooflights would further contribute to the cluttered appearance of the roofscape.
9. The Residential Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2017 states that roof conversions and additions will only be acceptable where high quality design is employed, where additions are in scale with the existing roof, and where the addition does not spoil the existing roof form. Table 1 within this SPD sets out that individual dormer windows on street-facing roof slopes or prominent side roof slopes should have a maximum width of 1.4 metres.
10. From the plans submitted, the proposed dormer would have a width of over 2.2 metres. It is noted that the width of the proposed dormer is dictated by the functional requirement for the staircase shaft in line with building regulations and that the requirements of the SPD are guidance only. However, the considerable scale of the proposed dormer would contribute to its dominant and disproportionate appearance, particularly as it would be larger than the gable projections on the floors below, resulting in a top heavy roof scape. Therefore, such a functional requirement would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area which I have identified.
11. The Council raise no objections in relation to the Juliet balcony on the rear elevation and I agree that this part of the proposal would not impact upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area.
12. Nevertheless, for the reasons above, the proposed dormer and rooflights would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area and would conflict with Policies CSTP22 and PMD2 of the Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development 2015. These policies seek to ensure that new development demonstrates high quality design founded on a thorough understanding of, and positive response to, the local context, contributing positively to the character of the area in which it is proposed. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal would also conflict with the Residential Alterations and Extensions SPD.

Other Matters

13. The appellant's comments that the proposed dormer would not result in any overlooking of neighbouring properties are noted. However, this is a neutral factor which would not outweigh the harm outlined above.
14. The appellant has provided photos of four nearby residential dwellings that they consider demonstrates the proposed design would align with the character of the area. However, from the photos provided, none of these properties have three gable projections on a street facing elevation and therefore are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal before me.

Conclusion

15. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, the development would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Grierson

INSPECTOR