



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2023

by C Carpenter BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/W/23/3316299

179A Wrotham Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0QJ

- 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 Raj Kalia against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20220911, dated 20 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with rear dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.
3. The Council's appeal questionnaire states the site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is clear from the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (GLPCS) Policies Map that this is not the case.
4. The plans and elevations show an existing chimney stack on the main roof of the host building, which is proposed to be removed. I observed during my visit that this chimney stack is not present on the building. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that this part of the proposed development has already taken place.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached house, which has been converted into two flats. The host building is of traditional appearance with a pitched roof and rear two-storey outrigger. The ridge of the outrigger's pitched roof is at the height of the eaves of the main roof. The rear first and second floor windows are aligned and their design matches that of the rear window in the outrigger, giving a unified appearance.

7. The flat roof of the principal dormer would be slightly lower than the ridgeline of the building's main roof. It would not wrap around the side of the house or affect the gable end. The removal of the chimney stack does not detract significantly from the character of the house. However, the dormer would extend across almost the full width of the roof, so its scale would dominate the building when viewed from the rear. The dormer would also include a significant proportion of blank façade, which would amplify this overbearing appearance. The position and design of the window would not reflect that of the windows in the lower levels of the host building, so they would look out of place.
8. The secondary dormer would appear as a significant, box-shaped structure on top of the outrigger, in front of the principal dormer. This would overwhelm the outrigger's pitched roof and obscure more than half of the eaves line of the main roof of the house. Although the window would be like that proposed in the principal dormer, it would not be aligned with it. It would also be different in design from the outrigger's existing rear-facing first floor window. This would result in an incoherent window arrangement that would detract from the character of the host building.
9. Together, the two dormers would create a confused and overbearing addition, which would be visible from neighbouring gardens and from the public realm in nearby Kent Road. While I accept there would be no change to the prevailing pattern of development in the area in terms of building lines and layout, the cohesion and character of the host building would be significantly undermined.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing building. This is contrary to Policy CS19 of the GLPCS, which requires new development to conserve and enhance the character of the local built environment. It is also contrary to the Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, which seeks rear dormers that are in proportion and in keeping with the design of the house. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) where it seeks good design.

Conclusion

11. I have found the proposal conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole. No other material considerations, including the Framework, have been shown to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

C Carpenter

INSPECTOR