



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2019

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th April 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/D/18/3218066

17 Sycamore Drive, Kings Worthy, Winchester SO23 7NW

- 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 Andrew Mant against the decision of Winchester City Council.
 - The application, Ref. 18/01683/HOU, dated 6 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2018.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with dormer to rear elevation and velux windows to front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The dormer has already been constructed and the application is for retrospective permission.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the dormer on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings.

Reasons

4. The dormer essentially occupies the full extent of the rear roof plane of the house and together with its flat roof is in my view a bulky addition entirely unsympathetic to the original house design. The effect is to dominate the appearance of the host building from its own garden and surrounding rear gardens. And because the dormer is seen together with the original roof of the adjoining No. 16, this gives further emphasis to the harmful visual impact.
 5. As the officer's report correctly observes, the extension gives the appearance of a three storey building rather than a two storey dwelling with a loft conversion, and although the external materials are in keeping this is insufficient to mitigate the harm caused to the character and appearance of the dwelling. I do not accept the appellant's view that because of the small windows the original tile hanging on the rear elevation was 'overbearing'. Accordingly, I regard the dormer as being unacceptably harmful as regards its effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and in conflict with local and national planning policy and guidance.
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6. As regards the effect on public views, the flank of the dormer can clearly be seen from Sycamore Drive through the gap between Nos. 17 and No. 18, but because of its rearward position and the oblique angle of view I do not regard the dormer as drawing the eye to an extent that has a significant effect on the street scene. In addition, there is a clear view of the dormer from Hookpit Lane, but as with the aspect from Sycamore Drive the impact is somewhat lessened by its set-back position. In the view from the Lane it is also in part shielded by other dwellings. Overall in terms of the public realm, I conclude the effect is harmful, albeit not enough on its own to warrant refusal of permission.
7. However, as I indicate in paragraph 4 above, the opposite is the case from surrounding gardens where the disproportionate size of the dormer is a dominant and assertive feature that has a significantly adverse effect on the more immediate skyline. As part of my visit I was asked to visit The Firs in Hookpit Farm Lane and from that property's rear garden I saw that the dormer is particularly visually intrusive.
8. Whilst not part of the public realm, the garden of this and other nearby properties are part of No. 17's surroundings that would be adversely affected, and with the dormer's large size and elevated position I do not consider that this impact can be entirely discounted just because the impact is on private rather than public views. This is particularly the case given that the officer's report states there are no other examples in Sycamore Drive of box style dormers which extend full width and full height on the rear elevation.
9. I have noted that the Inspector in an appeal at 8 Fryers Close, Kings Worthy concluded on balance that the impact on private views was not determinative. However, in the current appeal I consider the prominence of the dormer in its wider surroundings, albeit to a substantial extent private views, is such as to add weight to the Council's case for refusal of permission because of its impact on the dwelling itself. In forming this view I have taken account of the fact that some neighbours either support or have no objection to the dormer, but I have also noted that the Parish Council supported a refusal at the Planning Committee meeting .
10. The grounds of appeal refer to the fact that without the restrictive condition placed on the earlier permission the dormer would be permitted development. However, the Council would have considered the condition to be reasonable and necessary in this case and under those circumstances the development falls to be assessed against national and local policy and guidance.
11. The appellant has referred to the wording of paragraphs in the Supplementary Planning Document 'High Quality Places' being advisory, but my reading of both that guidance and the Council's policies is that the dormer is in clear breach of them. Overall, I therefore conclude that the dormer does not accord with Policy CP13 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy 2013; Policies DM15 & DM16 of the Local Plan Part 2 2017, and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.
12. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR