The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2018

by Timothy C King BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 July 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/D/18/3201589
20 Gower Road, Royston, SG8 5DU

- 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 & Mrs David Coughlin against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
- The application Ref 18/00170/FPH, dated 18 January 2018, was refused by notice dated 29 March 2018.
- The development proposed is described as *'Loft Conversion'.*

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The proposal's description on the application form does not address the actual development involved. The proposal would actually involve the erection of a rear dormer extension to enable the proposed loft conversion which would provide additional habitable floorspace.

Main Issue

3. This is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

Reasons

4. Nos 20, 22 and 24 Gower Road form an attractive period-age terrace. Nos 22 and 24 already have rear dormer extensions which the Council indicates would have been built under previous permitted development entitlements. The appellant mentions that these developments have necessitated the raising of both dwellings' ridgelines. However, at my site visit I noted that any increase is virtually imperceptible and the terrace remains largely intact in terms of its appearance from the street.

5. Admittedly, it would appear that the coping stones covering No 24's ridgeline are very slightly higher than the adjoining ridge at No 22, but it is difficult from ground level to identify any height difference between Nos 20 and 22.

6. In the circumstances the terrace's ridgeline appears roughly constant. The current proposal would, however, result in No 20's ridgeline being raised significantly so as to position the roof extension behind and allow for the necessary head height within. The appellants comment that without this alteration the dormer extension would rise above the existing ridgeline.

7. The Council has calculated that the height increase would be approximately 0.4m, which the appellants have not disputed. I find that the heightened ridgeline would be substantial, significantly more than has apparently occurred at the other dwellings along the terrace. It would therefore represent a discordant material alteration to the dwelling's appearance which, in turn, would create an imbalance in the terrace.

8. Whilst the ridgeline of No 24 may be slightly higher than originally built this would pale into insignificance when measured against a height increase of 0.4m. In the circumstances I find that the proposal would be detrimental to the host building and out of character with the terrace of which it forms part.

9. I note the appellants' concerns arising from their perception as to how the Council dealt with the application. However, this matter can have no bearing on my assessment of the proposal whereby I have reached my decision on the resultant impact of the extension proposed. The appellants have also provided a photograph of 'a street in Cambridge' where ridgelines along a terrace have been raised slightly against that of the respective neighbouring dwellings. However, I have not been provided with any specific details of this case and, besides, it does not outweigh the harm I have identified would result from the current proposal.

10. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the host dwelling, contrary to the design objectives of Saved Policy 28 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan and also relevant design advice in Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2018.

11. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all matters raised, the appeal does not succeed.

Timothy C King

INSPECTOR