



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 September 2023

by D Hartley BA (Hons) MTP MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P4225/D/23/3327006

22 Higher Cleggswood Avenue, Littleborough, Rochdale OL15 0DJ

- 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 Genty against the decision of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00410/HOUS, dated 20 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 28 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is front dormer to existing loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The planning application form states that the appellants are 'Mr & Mrs Gety', but the appeal form states that the appellants are 'Mr & Mrs Genty'. Clarification has been sought as part of this appeal and the appellants' surname on the planning application form is an error. The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Genty and this is reflected in the banner heading above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached bungalow falling within an established housing estate close to Hollingworth Lake. The evidence indicates that the dwellinghouse already has a loft conversion and indeed there is a small roof light within the front roof slope of the property.
5. As one enters the housing estate from Lake Bank and into Higher Cleggswood Avenue, there is a general and pleasing consistency to the roof slopes of the residential properties in so far that the vast majority are essentially unbroken. The simplicity of the mainly unbroken roof slopes adds positively and distinctively to the character and appearance of Higher Cleggswood Avenue. Many of the dwellings in the area are semi-detached. While there is the occasional exception, the mainly unbroken nature of the roof slopes ensures that there is some design symmetry for each of the pair of semi-detached houses, which again adds positively and distinctively to the character and appearance of this part of the housing estate.

6. It is proposed to erect a flat roof dormer to the front elevation of the dwellinghouse. It would be set in from the sides of the roof of the existing property and would be set down slightly from its ridge. Nevertheless, it would occupy a significant amount of roof space and when appreciated in the context of Higher Cleggswood Avenue as a whole, would appear as a dominant, top heavy and incongruous addition. This harm would be particularly apparent when approaching the site from the bend in the road close to the junction with Heald Close and where the development would be appreciated as being very prominent. Furthermore, owing to the scale and position of the dormer, it would cause material harm to the design symmetry of the pair of semi-detached bungalows and, in this regard, would constitute poor design.
7. I acknowledge that there are a very limited number of properties in Higher Cleggswood Avenue which include front roof dormers (e.g., Nos. 8 and 10). However, these are the exception rather than the norm in this street and it could not reasonably be said that their existence has fundamentally altered the distinctive character and appearance of this part of the housing estate to such a degree that the proposed dormer would be justified.
8. The appellant has referred to a dormer extension at No. 44 Heald Close¹ and has submitted a copy of the officer report associated with the grant of planning permission. An on-balance judgement was made by the officer in respect of the dormer at No. 44 Heald Close. The officer concluded that the principle of a front dormer would be acceptable '*in this particular location*'. No. 44 Heald Close, and other properties in this street which include dormers, are not seen in the same environmental context as the appeal property and, in any event, I have determined this appeal on its individual planning merits and based on the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and Higher Cleggswood Avenue.
9. The local planning authority also raise concern about the use of uPVC cladding and comment that this would be in direct conflict with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' 2016 (SPD) which states that materials used in the construction of dormers should match those of the existing roof. This conflict adds to the harm that I have identified above, although it is noteworthy that the appellants would accept the imposition of a planning condition, if necessary, relating to the colour and material of the proposed dormer. Nonetheless, the imposition of a planning condition relating to the colour and material of the proposed dormer would not overcome my other concerns above.
10. For the above reasons, I therefore find that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would not accord with the design, character and appearance requirements of policies DM1 and P3 of Rochdale Core Strategy 2016, the SPD and chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

¹ Planning permission Ref 22/01424/HOUS

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would not accord with the development plan for the area taken as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

D Hartley

INSPECTOR