The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2017

by Nick Fagan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 17 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/D/17/3168605
13 Beechcroft Close, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 2HU

- 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 and Mrs T and J Bembridge against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
- The application Ref F/16/79437, dated 18 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 December 2016.
- The development proposed is a loft enlargement and conversion.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Beechcroft Close is a short cul-de-sac of 16 bungalows, typical of the character of this post-war suburban residential area comprising a mixture of bungalows and two-storey houses. Most of the bungalows in the Close, including the appeal property and its pair at No 14, are semi-detached. Most have pitched and hipped roofs although those on the eastern side of the Close have projecting gables to the street as does 23 Hillcrest Avenue on its northern corner.

4. Nos 13 and 14 have shallow pitched and hipped roofs with No 14 projecting forward of the appeal property. The proposed loft conversion would involve raising the height of the existing roof by just below 1 metre and forming two gables to front and rear and one to the side elevation facing No 12 in order to create sufficient floor space with adequate headroom.

5. Nos 13 and 14 are slightly sunk below the level of the highway unlike the bungalows opposite where the land rises up gently from the road. Nonetheless, the proposed higher roof would project above that of No 14 and would be clearly visible when viewed looking down the Close towards the turning head and it would look clumsy and incongruous when seen in conjunction with No 14. It would be alien to the street scene of the Close because there is no similar feature.

6. There are also no other front gables at first floor level to any of the other bungalows in the Close and this would also appear odd and out of context in the street scene particularly because it would be higher than No 14's roof.

7. The appellants draw my attention to a gabled dormer bungalow at 4 Beechcoft Way, which is readily visible from the street outside the appeal premises as the photographs in their written representations demonstrate. However, when viewed close up this gable, which is considerably higher than its neighbouring hipped roof bungalows, does not improve the street scene in Beechcoft Way and so cannot be used as a justification for the appeal proposal. In any case it is not comparable with the appeal proposal because that property is detached whereas this proposal would clash unfortunately with the paired dwelling at No 14 in the way I describe above.

8. The appellants also draw my attention to many other gabled bungalows and two storey houses in nearby roads. But I do not see the relevance of such dwellings to this appeal. Beechcroft Close itself is characterised by shallow pitched roof bungalows and the proposed gables and increase in height above the roof of No 14 would be a poor and insensitive design in this context, which is the relevant local context.

9. For these reasons I conclude that the proposed loft conversion would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore fail to comply with Policy 59.BE of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review, which requires development to take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality and is appropriate in mass, scale, design and siting both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings. It would also fail to comply with relevant policy on design in the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Fagan

INSPECTOR