

Plan: A DC/04/00555/FUL Longbridge Ward (R)

Address: 152 Westrow Drive, Barking

Development: Loft conversion involving the construction of a rear dormer window and the conversion of hipped roof to a gable end

Applicant: Mr Mellor

Introduction and Description of Development

The application property is an end of terrace house facing west onto Westrow Drive. The proposed development is a hip to gable conversion and the construction of dormer window to the rear. The property has an existing side and rear single storey extension. It is proposed that this new bedroom created in the loft space is to be used as a bedroom for Mrs Mellor as Mr Mellor is currently receiving treatment for a brain tumour and requires a separate room.

Background

An application for a similar development was initially refused in 1997, and an amended version which had removed the hip to gable conversion was granted consent in 1998. An application for the same development currently applied for was received in December 2003 (DC/03/00995/FUL) and was refused in January 2004 for the following reason:

'The proposal is contrary to policy H22 of the Unitary Development Plan in that the conversion of the hipped style roof to a gable would appear as discordant and intrusive features in the roofscape, and have an adverse affect on the appearance of the building and the visual amenity of the area.'

Consultations

a) Adjoining occupiers

One letter of objection was received, however the issues raised are those that are dealt with by Building Control. The relevant BC inspector has been informed of this letter.

UDP Policy

H22 and appendix 7- Extensions and Alterations

Policy issue - Design and appearance of gable ended roof.

Analysis

Policy H22 Appendix 7 states that "Where an extension is proposed for the side of a dwelling, it is especially important that it should be sympathetic in form.....Dormer windows should relate to the windows of the original dwelling in proportion, design materials and position. Dormer windows should be set in from all roof edges".

Within the street scene, the hip to gable alteration will appear as an unduly prominent feature that will be out of balance with the existing dwellings. To the rear of the property it is proposed to create a flat roof dormer within the roofspace, however this has been 'set-in' from the roof edges and complies with policy.

The main impact of the proposal arrives from the hip to gable conversion and resultant impact on the street scene and to the neighbouring dwelling number 152 Westrow Drive. This will create an over prominent feature within the street scene when viewed from Westrow Drive, disrupting the balance of the simple terrace of dwellings and increasing the physical bulk of the property. The applicant has raised the issue of a permission granted in 2000 for 138 Westrow Drive for a similar development, however after further investigation it appears that this was approved as it was felt that the length of the terrace would mitigate the visual impact. The completed development has been assessed and it is considered that the impact to the premises in the next terrace was misjudged and that the development is incongruous in the street scene. As a result it is not felt that this should be used as a precedent to allow a further development of the same type.

The applicant was asked for details of why the extra bedroom was required, the intended use of the other rooms on the first floor and whether the conversion of the garage would be more suitable for a person with impaired mobility. Mrs Mellor responded stating that her husband had recently had surgery for a brain tumour and requires a large bedroom. The carers require a large amount of space around the bed to carry out essential care for Mr Mellor. She also states that she has three grown up sons who, although they were away from home at present, would normally share the two other first floor bedrooms thus requiring the extra bedroom for Mrs Mellor. However in both the letter from Mrs Mellor and Mr Mellor's GP it states that Mr Mellor's mobility is impaired and will require a wheelchair or walking frame. Therefore the question was raised with regard to creating a bedroom on the ground floor which would appear to be more suitable for the applicant. Mrs Mellor states that this idea has been given consideration, but part of the existing garage has already been converted into a utility room and does not leave enough room for a bedroom. However as the property has already been extended on two previous occasions it is felt that this existing space could possibly be used to create a more suitable bedroom for Mr Mellor and therefore the need for the loft conversion would be eradicated.

Recommendation

That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

The proposal is contrary to policy H22 of the Unitary Development Plan in that the conversion of the hipped style roof to a gable would appear as a discordant and intrusive feature in the roofscape, and have an adverse affect on the appearance of the building and the visual amenity of the area.