

OFFICER REPORT FOR DECISION UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

APPLICATION NO: P1026.24

WARD: Squirrels Heath **Date Received:** 19th July 2024

ADDRESS: 17 Compton Avenue
Romford

PROPOSAL: Loft conversion with rear dormer, and front and rear rooflights

DRAWING NO(S): LC02
LC04
LC05
LC07
Location Plan

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that **planning permission be REFUSED** for the reason(s) given at the end of the report

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the southern side of Compton Avenue and contains a double-storey semi-detached dwelling.

The dwellinghouse is not a listed building and is not located within a conservation area. The surrounding area is residential consisting mainly of pairs of semi-detached dwellings with hipped roofs.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The applicant is seeking planning consent for a loft conversion with rear dormer, and front and rear rooflights.

RELEVANT HISTORY

P1027.24	Single storey rear extension Awaiting Decision
P1028.24	Single storey outbuilding to rear Awaiting Decision

CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

Letters were sent to the immediate neighbouring properties. Three objections received, summarised as:

- The ceiling height is too low to meet the requirements of building regulations;
- Overlooking towards neighbouring properties;
- Removal of trees at the end of the garden will allow for overlooking;

The applicant would need separate consent from the Council's Building Control Department or from a licensed Building Control Operator to ensure the proposal meets the requirements of current Building Regulations. Purely from a planning perspective there is no policy specifying a minimum ceiling height for a converted loft within an existing dwelling.

The overlooking concerns will be discussed in the amenity section of the report.

RELEVANT POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework

London Plan

- Policy D1 - London's form, character and capacity for growth
- Policy D4 - Delivering good design
- Policy T6 - Car parking

Havering Local Plan Adopted November 2021

- Policy 7 Residential Design and Amenity
- Policy 24 Parking provision and design
- Policy 26 Urban Design

Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document Adopted 2011

MAYORAL CIL IMPLICATIONS

This application is not CIL liable because the new floor space created would not exceed 100 square metres.

STAFF COMMENTS

An in-person site visit was not undertaken. In determining this planning application, photos, Google street view, aerial view images and submitted drawings / photos were used to assess the site and the proposal.

DESIGN/IMPACT ON STREET/GARDEN SCENE

The rear garden scene along Compton Avenue is relatively consistent typified generally by semi-detached dwellings with various forms of rear extensions at the ground floor set amongst well sized gardens. There are no examples of there being any other dwelling which benefits from a large rear facing dormer.

The proposed scheme would see the existing hipped roof undergo a part hip-to-gable conversion to create additional floor space within the roof. The REA SPD states that:

'roof extensions and alterations can change the appearance and character of the dwelling, particularly when alterations are made to the front elevation. Proposals to convert a hipped roof to a gable end roof to one house on a pair of semi-detached dwellings can result in unbalancing the pair. Where the Council has control over such proposals and hipped roofs form a characteristic of the house and/or street, a gable end will not be considered acceptable.'

The subject dwelling does form half of a semi-detached pair, of which the attached neighbour has a hipped roof. As such, the part hip-to-gable conversion would unacceptably disrupt the existing symmetry between the dwellings harming the character of the semi-detached pair. The part hip-to-gable would result in a roof form that looks awkward when viewed from the street scene given it would have a small contrived section of the roof which is set at a right angle. This would relate poorly to the attached neighbour and the overall symmetry between pairs of dwellings within the street scene. Officers do accept there are examples within the street scene where one dwelling has a gabled end (ie. No's. 8 and 18 Compton Avenue), however these works were completed under Permitted Development and do not form a relevant precedent for a Householder Application.

Notwithstanding the impact to symmetry of the semi-detached pair more broadly the surrounding area is generally consists of dwellings finished with a hipped roof. The contrived partial hip-to-gable extension would add a roof design which is incongruous within the immediate area and would be out of keeping with the established pattern of development harmful to the overall character in the street scene.

The Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD also provides guidance on the design of dormers and any roof conversions, notably that:

'dormers should be contained well within the body of the roof, by being set well back from the eaves, and by setting the sides well in from any gables or party walls. Dormers must never extend above the ridge line of the roof and should be located well below it. All windows at roof level, particularly dormers, should relate to the windows of the original house in proportion, design and position'.

The proposed rear dormer would be 5.4m wide and would encompass 89% of the width of the rear elevation of the dwelling (following the part hip-to-gable conversion). This is a substantial coverage of the rear elevation and it is difficult to argue this meets the requirements of the above mentioned policy. It is not well set-in from either sides and would appear too bulky and poorly scaled to the rear elevation. Additionally, the rear dormer would appear to lie at the full height of the main ridge line of the roof which further contradicts the above policy and exacerbates how prominent the rear dormer would be from view of the rear garden scene of neighbours. The rear dormer is not particularly well set in from the eaves either meaning no part of the proposal provides any compensation for the overall size and bulk of the dormer which would appear too dominant within the roof slope harming both the character of the host dwelling and its contribution to rear garden scene along Compton

Avenue.

The combination of the above demonstrates that the proposed part hip-to-gable and rear facing dormer represent a highly inappropriate form of development which would be harmful to the character of the host dwelling street and rear garden scene and would set an unwanted precedent contrary to Policies 7 and 26 of the Havering Local Plan and the Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD (2011).

IMPACT ON AMENITY

Consideration has been given to the impact of the proposal on the neighbouring properties, primarily in respect of overshadowing, loss of light and loss of privacy.

The part hip-to-gable would not cause harm to either adjacent neighbour. The main concern is the impact of the rear facing dormer window.

The dormer is set in from the eaves and would not cause harm to the amenity of either adjacent neighbours at No's. 15 and 19 Compton Avenue in terms of loss of sunlight or overshadowing.

As mentioned previously the dormer would be very bulky with the overall scale being disproportionate when compared with the main dwelling. As such, the dormer appears as a highly dominate feature within the rear roof slope. Given both adjacent neighbours dwellings are set right at the common boundaries and the most used section of their rear garden would likely lie in very close proximity to the rear dormer Officers consider that it would appear materially intrusive from the perspective of both neighbours when they are utilising their rear gardens. The large and bulky nature of the dormer would likely 'loom over' the neighbours given how close in proximity the dwellings are positioned.

Neighbour's raised concerns that the proposal would lead to increased overlooking. While the removal of trees at the rear of the property would increase views towards No's. 21/23 Cranbrook Drive given the physical separation distance of approximately 44m this is unlikely to be materially harmful to their amenity. The rear dormer would also have windows with a direct vantage into the rear gardens of both adjacent neighbours. It is acknowledged there would be the potential for a degree of overlooking already to occur particularly from both the first and second floor windows. However, the additional height from this vantage point may have constitute a more intrusive view than is currently afforded by the first floor windows of the existing dwelling. This may lead to a further reduction in privacy to the rear garden environment of surrounding neighbours to the detriment of their ongoing amenity. However, given the degree of overlooking already likely occurring it is unlikely the increase in harm by views from the rear dormer would not result in a material increase in harm to amenity which warrants refusal solely on the basis of overlooking.

Overall, the development would be materially intrusive from the perspective of both adjacent neighbours harmful to their ongoing residential amenity contrary to Policy 7 of the Havering Local Plan and the Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD (2011).

HIGHWAY/PARKING

The proposal will not impact on the parking within the site and therefore no highway or parking issues would arise.

KEY ISSUES/CONCLUSIONS

The proposal is not considered to be in accordance with the above mentioned policies and guidance and, therefore, a REFUSAL is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that **planning permission be REFUSED** for the following reason(s)

1 Reason for refusal - Dormers

The proposed rear dormer would, by reason of its design and excessive bulk appear out of scale and character with the existing dwelling and the surrounding garden scene. The rear dormer would represent a visually intrusive form of development from the perspective of both adjacent neighbours at No's 15 and 19 Compton Avenue harmful to their ongoing residential amenity contrary to Policies 7 & 26 of the Havering Local Plan and the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD (2011).

2 Refusal non standard

The proposed part hip-to-gable conversion would unbalance the existing symmetry of the semi-detached pair of dwellings harming both the character of the pair and the surrounding street scene. This would introduce an incongruous and contrived design to the roof of the dwelling inconsistent with the established form of development to roofs of neighbouring dwellings along Compton Avenue appearing as a visually intrusive feature in the street scene harmful to the appearance of the surrounding area contrary to Policies 7 and 26 of the Local Plan and the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD.

INFORMATIVES

1 Refusal - No negotiation ENTER DETAILS

Statement Required by Article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015: Consideration was given to seeking amendments, but given conflict with adopted planning policy, notification of intended refusal and the reason(s) for it was given to the agent via email on 13/09/2024.

Authorising Officer:



Neil Goate

20th September 2024