



PLANNING STATEMENT

December 2023 // 3 WEST PARK DRIVE, BILLERICAY

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Author: Matthew Driscoll MRTPI



MJD
P L A N N I N G

MJD Planning Ltd
325 Central Avenue
Southend-on-Sea
SS2 4EF
matt@mjdplanning.com

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support an application submitted on behalf of Mr and Mrs Fleming, for planning permission for the removal of the existing roof, and construction of a new pitched roof with a raised ridge incorporating a loft conversion, a single rear flat roof dormer and 5 No. rooflights, internal alterations and external material changes at 3 West Park Drive, Billericay.
- 1.2 The application follows the refusal of an application on 22nd March 2023 under 22/01802/FULL for a *“Proposal for the removal of the existing roof, and construction of a new pitched roof with a raised ridge incorporating a loft conversion, three rear dormers and 6No. rooflights, internal alterations and external material changes”*. This application seeks to overcome these previous reasons for refusal and is discussed further in this Statement.

2 THE SITE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application property is a two-storey detached dwelling on the western side of West Park Drive, Billericay.
- 2.2 It sits within a row of six dwellings, all detached. Nos. 3 and 5 West Park Drive are similar L-shape detached dwellings, with shallow hipped roofs. Most of the dwellings in the street scene are of different design and with various roof pitches and heights.
- 2.3 West Park Drive itself slopes downwards from south, at the junction with Western Avenue, to north at the junction with West Park Crescent. Dwellings within the wider area are an eclectic mix and there is no one design style that could define the character of the area.
- 2.4 The plot itself is large, extending approximately 50m in depth and 17m in width. Views of the property are limited to the north on West Park Drive, or directly outside of the property. Views from the south are restricted because of orientation, vegetation and other existing dwellings and boundaries. A more detailed assessment of the character of the area is undertaken in Section 6 of this Statement.
- 2.5 In the context of the wider area, the property is within close walking distance to Billericay High Street and less than 500m walking distance to Billericay Railway Station.

3 PLANNING HISTORY & BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council's online portal refers to five previous applications.

- 12/00315/FULL – Single storey rear extension – Approved June 2012
- 20/01559/TPOBAS - TPO/06/87 Oak (T1) - Prune back to previous pruning points at 1.5m – Approved December 2020
- 22/01434/LDCP - To establish the lawfulness of turning the existing hipped roof into a gabled roof with a loft conversion and a rear dormer – Refused November 2022
- 22/01690/LDCP - To establish the lawfulness of proposed hip to gable roof extensions and rear box dormer – Approved December 2022

3.2 As mentioned in Section 1, planning permission was refused on 22nd March 2023 for “*Proposal for the removal of the existing roof, and construction of a new pitched roof with a raised ridge incorporating a loft conversion, three rear dormers and 6No. rooflights, internal alterations and external material changes*” under 22/01802/FULL. The Application was refused for a single ground of refusal:

1 The proposed development, by reason of its increase in roof height combined with the hip to gable roof extensions would result in an overly large and dominant dwellinghouse, to the detriment of both the character and appearance of the host dwelling and that of the street scene. Additionally, the proposed rear dormers by reason of their design, including excessive size, scale, bulk and use of materials would be disproportionate and detrimental to the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Therefore, for these reasons the proposal is contrary to Policy BAS BE12 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 126 and 130 of the NPPF, 2021.

4 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 This proposal seeks a replacement roof, with an increase in ridge height by 0.7m and the creation of a clipped gable roof form to the flank elevations. To the rear, a small box dormer is proposed, set in 4.65m from the side elevations, 43cm from the ridge and 94cm from the eaves. Five rooflights are proposed to the front elevation.

4.2 The proposed changes to the existing dwelling allow for the creation of two bedrooms and a bathroom within the roof space.

5 POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 This section sets out the planning policy framework against which the proposed development should be assessed. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications should be determined in

accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 5.2 Basildon Borough Council's current development plan comprises the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies – September 2007 (adopted March 1998 with alterations in September 1999).
- 5.3 The Council undertook a 'Compliance Review of the Saved Policies with the NPPF 2018' in September 2018. It concluded that Policy BAS BE12 complied with Chapter 12 of the NPPF 2018, and that weight could be given to the policy in decision-making.
- 5.4 Statements of Government Policy can also be material considerations in determining a development proposal. In this case, relevant central government guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

- 5.5 The Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in September 2023, which sets out the overarching national policy framework for planning. The following NPPF principles are considered particularly relevant to the Application Scheme. The development has been fully prepared to respond to such principles. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, including paragraphs:
- 7 Sustainable development
 - 8 Three objectives of sustainable development
 - 10-12 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - 38 Decision-making
 - 47-50 Determining applications
 - 126-136 Achieving well-designed places
- 5.6 At the time of writing (12th December 2023), an updated version of the NPPF is due to be published within the next couple of days. We have not had sight of this but understand that it follows the draft that was out for consultation earlier this year. The draft primarily concentrated on housing provision and numbers but also encouraged more sites for small builders, encouraging upward extension of buildings and promoting “well-designed and beautiful” buildings. However, while it is likely that these amendments will be in place by the time a planning application is determined for this Site, the proposed changes do not fundamentally affect the proposed extensions to this property.

NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE (NPPG)

5.7 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) documents were published in March 2014 and are regularly updated to respond to new policy documents and legislation. The following NPPG documents are considered relevant to the Application Scheme.

- Design: process and tools (2019)
- Effective use of land (2019)

6 PLANNING APPRAISAL

6.1 Following the determination of 23/00457/FULL, it is considered that the main issues for consideration are:

- The impact on the character and appearance of the locality;
- The impact on the living conditions of neighbouring amenities.

6.2 These matters are considered individually below.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

6.3 As confirmed within the Officer Report for 22/01802/FULL, there is no in principle objection to extensions to the residential dwelling. However, it must be considered in the context of Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies.

THE IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE LOCALITY

6.4 Policy BAS BE12 states that:

Policy BAS BE12

Planning permission for new residential development, and for the alteration and extension of existing dwellings, will be refused if it causes material harm in any of the following ways:-

- i. Harm to the character of the surrounding area, including the street scene;
- ii. Overlooking;
- iii. Noise or disturbance to the occupants of neighbouring dwellings;
- iv. Overshadowing or over-dominance; and
- v. Traffic danger or congestion.

6.5 As noted later within this Statement, there are no overlooking, noise, overshadowing or over-dominance from the proposed extensions on the neighbouring dwellings and there will be no highway safety concerns. As a result, the proposal meets the tests of BAS BE12 ii, iii, iv and v.

- 6.6 In the consideration of 22/01802/FULL, the Officer Report notes that the Council considered that the refused proposals would “*result in a more dominant roof design*”, which would “*exacerbate the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area*” and would “*dominate the street scene*”. However, there is no assessment of the character and appearance of the surrounding area as part of this conclusion.
- 6.7 In addition, the Council considered that the provision of three dormers to the rear roof slope would, “*by reason of their excessive size, scale and bulk in the roof space (which is exacerbated by the proposed quartz zinc surrounds to each dormer), would result in a significant visual impact, disproportionate to and detrimental to the character and appearance of the host dwelling*”.
- 6.8 Officers commented that the previous development would “*exacerbate the impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would dominate the street scene*”. However, the starting point of any assessment on impact, particularly in the consideration of the surrounding area and the street scene, is to establish the character and the existing setting.
- 6.9 West Park Drive is fundamentally characterised by a varied mix of large, detached properties, of eclectic design, but the greatest feature of the road, is its topography. It sits on a hill, with land sloping from the higher point to the south, with the junction with Western Road, to the lower point at the junction with West Park Crescent. This gradient is not subtle, and photographs do not do it justice.



- 6.10 The ridge lines of houses are also deceiving. There are properties within the street scene which have much more significant ridge heights than other properties, with the application site and its neighbour at 5 West Park Drive, having one of the shallowest roof pitches.
- 6.11 The backdrop of dwellings is also that of larger or higher properties behind.
- 6.12 Roof forms are also varied. The property and its immediate neighbour are hipped roofed, but the property at No. 1 is gable fronted, with a triple gable flank elevation – visible from West Park Drive. Nos. 7 and 7a are clipped gable roofs, again with gable flank projections, while No. 9-11 is a gable fronted building providing two flats.
- 6.13 Nos. 2 and 4 West Park Drive are gable sided detached dwellings, with No.2 having been extended, with an increase in ridge height approved under 01/01365/FULL. Records of this are not available online, but this increase in ridge height is notable by the change in brickwork on the southern elevation. The increase in ridge height was by at least seventeen brick courses, which equates to an increase in height of circa 1.275m.



- 6.15 Nos, 6, 8 and 10 West Park Drive also have gable roofs, with No. 8 recently having been re-roofed, and appears to be circa 0.5m above the two neighbouring properties. The drawings within 21/01424/FULL, suggest that the roof has a height from eaves level to ridge of 3.63m (for comparison, the proposed height from eaves to ridge at No. 3 West Park Drive is 3.45m).
- 6.16 No. 12 West Park Drive has a hipped crown roof, higher than its neighbour at No. 10, despite the gradient of West Park Drive and of significant massing. The ridge height of No. 12 was raised by 650mm under 16/00985/FULL. The Officer Report for that application, considered under the same local plan and with the same NPPF in place, recognised that *“the general character of the area is residential, and comprises mainly larger, detached houses of individual design”*.
- 6.17 In the consideration of the increase in roof height, the Officer Report states:
- “The proposed increase in the height of the roof of the dwelling would not be significant in the context of the varied character of the street scene with a variety of housing designs, heights and styles.”*
- 6.18 The eaves to ridge measurement taken from the approved elevation drawings for 16/00985/FULL is 4.0m.
- 6.19 Finally, Nos. 14 and 16 West Park Drive are hipped roof properties, but with high ridges. The approved drawing for 19/01319/FULL suggests an existing eaves to ridge height of 2.23m, but the elevation drawings indicate a significantly shallower roof than exists and is clearly incorrect.
- 6.20 As result, within these fourteen houses within West Park Drive, we know that two have had an increase in ridge heights, one by 1.275m and one by 0.65m. The latter considered not to be significant *“in the context of the varied character of the street scene with a variety of housing designs, heights and styles”*.
- 6.21 We also know that even as a result of the proposed increase in ridge height of 0.7m, the overall height of the roof, at 3.45m (from eaves to ridge), is still lower than other dwellings within the street scene and that the ridge will not be higher than that at No. 1 West Park Drive.
- 6.22 The proposed increase in height of the roof, is therefore, entirely within the character of the area and street scene. The introduction of the clipped gable roof to the flank elevations, reduces the massing of a gable end, for which extensions to the existing roof can be undertaken to create, as confirmed under 22/01690/LDCP.

6.23 The amount in increase in roof form, particularly from a flank elevation perspective, is not significant (area of increase shown in green below). Percentage wise, the increase is just 8% on the existing height, an almost identical percentage increase to that of No. 12 West Park Drive.



6.24 Given the mixed character of the area and the variety of building heights, together with the topography of the site, the proposed raising of the ridge height of the dwelling and the provision of a clipped gable roof to the flank elevations, would not be out of keeping with the street scene where similar roof forms and heights are displayed. The principal view where the height increase will be evident is from the northern end of West Park Drive. However, it would also be seen in the context of the gradient of West Park Drive and the surrounding properties, in particular No. 1 West Park Drive and Nos. 42/44 Western Road.



- 6.25 It is therefore considered, following a detailed assessment of character, and supported by previous Council decisions, that the proposed increase in ridge height and introduction of a clipped gable roof form to the flank elevations would be entirely in keeping with the character of the area and street scene, given its varied character and the variety of housing designs, heights and styles.
- 6.26 Turning to the flat roof dormer to the rear, the pre-application advice acknowledges that the LDC allows for the construction of a rear box dormer in the existing roof, and this is a material consideration. It requires that any proposed rear dormer *“would need to ensure it is subservient in the roof space.”*
- 6.27 The sub-text of the Policy BAS BE12 refers to the Council’s Development Control Guidelines SPG. These Guidelines were originally published in April 1993 and were amended most recently in 2022. The document no longer refers to any guidance for extensions of existing dwellings. The Council, therefore, do not have any requirements relating to the provision of dormers. Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that being *“clear about design expectations”*, and *“how these will be tested”*, is essential for achieving good design. There is no policy position regarding how far a dormer should be set in.
- 6.28 However, in this case, it is considered that the proposed dormer is subservient and would meet the requirements of Policy BAS BE12. The dormer is set in 4.65m from the flank elevations of the host dwelling, 43cm from the ridge and 94cm from the eaves.

6.29 Visibility of this dormer will be limited. While it is apparent on the flank elevation drawings, the dormer is set in from each side by 4.6m. It will not be visible from West Park Drive, heading north from Western Avenue. The below is the first view of the property from the footpath.



6.30 Views from the north, looking south are also unlikely to reflect the dormer, particularly when it is set in so far from the flank elevations. The below photograph is taken from West Park Crescent, where it may be possible to see a marginal glimpse of the dormer if constructed, behind the roof form of No. 5 West Park Drive.



6.31 Due to the increased elevation of Western Avenue and Summerdale, it is not considered that views of the rear of the roof and the proposed dormer will be visible

from public locations. Any views from private properties are seen in the context of the rear of existing dwellings and the proposed dormer is seen as subservient within the roof form.

- 6.32 The proposed development would not be out of scale, overly dominant or oppressive and would not have a materially harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, there is no conflict with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007, which seeks to ensure satisfactory design which does not harm the street scene or those principles of the National Planning Policy Framework that seek good design sympathetic to the local area.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOUR LIVING CONDITIONS

- 6.33 Considering the arrangement of windows, the separation gap and the layout of the proposed development and the neighbouring properties, it is considered that the proposed development will not have a material adverse impact on any of the neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy and overbearing impact. The proposal, therefore, complies with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan.

- 6.34 This position was supported in the proposed extensions under 22/01802/FULL.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

- 6.35 In the consideration of 22/01802/FULL, the Officer Report concludes that *“the proposal would affect the existing parking provision for the property and would not result in material harm to highway safety”*. There is no change to this, and the previous position of the LPA must be maintained.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This is an application for an extension to the existing dwelling to comprise the following works:
- A replacement roof with a 0.7m increase in ridge height and a clipped gable roof form;
 - a rear, flat roof dormer.
- 7.2 The resulting proposed dwelling is of attractive design, featuring high-quality materials.

- 7.3 It is considered that the proposal has overcome or countered the reasons for refusal set out by the Council within 23/00457/FULL. There is also an established fallback position under 22/01690/LDCP, which has established the lawful development of a hip-to-gable extension and a flat roof box style dormer. This is a significant material consideration in the determination of this planning application.
- 7.4 It is considered that there are no policy designations on the property that would restrict development and the principle of an extension to the dwelling is acceptable, subject to meeting planning policy.
- 7.5 The above Statement concludes that the Application as proposed would be acceptable in its effect on the character and appearance of the application property and the wider street scene, in accordance with the aims of Basildon Local Plan Policy BAS BE12 and Paragraph 134 of the NPPF and the National Design Guide.