
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2016

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/16/3155724

5 Gainsborough Drive, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0UZ

- 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 N McDonald against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/501685/FULL, dated 25 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension above the existing garage and utility room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Gainsborough Drive is a modern residential development characterised by two-storey detached properties. The properties, in the main, comprise two or three different architectural styles within this streetscape. There is uniformity to the appearance of the area with properties sited close to one another. The properties, in general, host a single-storey pitched roof element to one side. This retains a separation at first floor between dwellings. These gaps are an important element of the character of this street scape.
 4. The appeal property and No.7 have a small side alleyway between the dwelling and the common boundary. The proposal would be erected above the existing garage and utility room and therefore would maintain the same side building line. The Council indicate that the remaining gap at first floor level would be 1.8m. This would be below the minimum gap identified in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Residential Extensions'.
 5. I accept that the proposed side extension has been designed to be subordinate to the host dwelling and would respect the appearance of the appeal property itself. However, the first floor element, by virtue of its proximity to the side elevation of No.7, would erode the gap between the appeal property and No.7. This would reduce the perception of space and openness between these two properties. This would be particularly noticeable in the street scene given both
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the elevated and forward siting of the appeal property. The proposal would have a terracing effect that would appear at odds with the rhythm of the street scene.

6. I note that a similar extension is currently under construction at No.7. However its relationship with the adjoining property to the south side differs as No.7 is sited further back from the highway and therefore is not readily visible in the street scene. Furthermore, the roof pitch of No.9 slopes away. As such, the relationship is directly comparable to the appeal proposal.
7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would be in conflict with Policy H18 of the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan and the SPD which seeks extensions and additions to residential properties to complement the street scene and adjacent existing buildings, amongst other matters. Policy H18 is consistent with the aims of Paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit.

Other Matters

8. My attention has been drawn to another appeal decision¹. In this case an existing two-storey side extension at the neighbouring property extended to the boundary of appeal property. The circumstances clearly differ to that of this proposal, therefore I can only afford this appeal decision very limited weight. In any event, the appeal before me relates to a different site and therefore can and should be considered in its own right.

Conclusions

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

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR

¹ 34 Buckland Hill, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0SA