
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 September 2016

by Alex Hutson MATP CMLI MArborA

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

Decision date: 10th October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/A2280/D/16/3154917

2 Bushmeadow Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2YH

- 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 M Simmonds against the decision of Medway Council.
 - The application Ref MC/16/1614, dated 8 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is "Resubmission of single storey side extension".
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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. The appeal property, which adjoins 20 Broomcroft Road, is a semi-detached, chalet style bungalow, with an uncomplicated appearance, located on the corner of Bushmeadow Road and Broomcroft Road. The wider area is predominantly residential in character and displays a variety of dwelling types, including detached and semi-detached bungalows and two storey houses, and a variety of architectural styles and roof forms.
 4. The appeal property has a generous setback from the frontage of Bushmeadow Road which provides a noticeable spatial quality to this part of the streetscape. Its front gable projection shares a similar and well defined building line to that of the front gable projection of a neighbouring property at 4 Bushmeadow Road. Its detached, single storey garage, also set back considerably from the road frontage, is a modest sized structure that has a markedly subordinate relationship with its host dwelling. These factors combine to positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area.
 5. The proposal seeks to erect a single storey side extension, which would comprise three distinct elements; a utility room, a bedroom/bathroom and a replacement garage. I acknowledge that the proposed side extension would have a broken frontage, some articulation and would incorporate traditional roof styles seen in the area. I also acknowledge that a central gable feature
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would be incorporated into the proposal in an effort to reflect the front projecting gable on the main house.

6. Nevertheless, there would clearly be an incoherent and unbalanced design and scale between each of the three elements of the proposal. Each of the three elements would display an inconsistent roof form with a variety of heights which would result in a poor relationship with one another and with the host dwelling. Furthermore, the bedroom/bathroom element would step noticeably forward of the prevailing building line along this part of Bushmeadow Road. This would considerably increase its prominence in the streetscape and would reduce the spatial qualities along this part of the road.
7. As a result of the combination of these factors, the proposal would appear complex and contrived in the context of the uncomplicated appearance of the host dwelling and would fail to respect the prevailing pattern of development in the area. Whilst architectural styles should not be imposed, they should seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness, which in this instance, for the reasons set out above, the proposal would fail to achieve. I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the streetscape and area.
8. The proposal would therefore be contrary to saved Policy BNE1- General Principles for Built Development, of the Medway Local Plan 2003. This policy requires, amongst other things, development, including extensions, to be appropriate in relation to the character and appearance of the area through its scale, mass, proportion, details, layout and siting and to respect the scale and appearance of buildings and the visual amenity of the area. This policy is consistent with the broad aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework that seek planning to secure high quality design and to take account of the different roles and character of different areas.

Other matters

9. The appellants highlight a side extension at 2 Broomcroft Road in support of their case. Nevertheless, I observed that this extension maintains the prevailing building line along this road, has a consistent roof height and strongly reflects the design and scale of the front projecting gable of the host property, thereby maintaining an overall balance to its appearance. This extension is therefore of a design that appears sympathetic to and in keeping with the character and appearance of its host dwelling. In light of my findings above, I do not, therefore, consider that this example is a helpful comparison to the proposal under consideration in this appeal, given the considerable design differences, and does not justify a planning consent in this instance.
10. The appellants claim that, subject to some minor amendments, a similar form of development would be permitted under the provisions of the Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. However, the issue of whether or not planning permission is required for a different proposal is not a matter for me to determine in the context of an appeal made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Furthermore, I have no detailed plans before me to demonstrate exactly what form such a development might take to allow me to make any informed comparisons. Moreover, without any such plans, there is no strong evidence before me to demonstrate that the appellants intend to implement such a scheme. This

matter is therefore not a material planning consideration to which I can afford any significant weight.

11. I acknowledge that there is no dispute between the main parties that the proposal would maintain highway safety and neighbour living conditions. I have also taken into consideration the fact that the appellants have indicated a desire to provide living accommodation for their elderly parents. However, these matters are not, individually or cumulatively, sufficient to outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the area.
12. I note that there have been no third party objections and indeed, some have lent their support for the proposal. However, no substantive planning arguments have been put forward by any third parties to lead me away from my overall conclusions on the main issue.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alex Hutson

INSPECTOR