

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2016

by S M Holden BSc MSc CEng MICE TPP FCIHT MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17TH October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/W/16/3153388

11 Hampden Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 6JL

- 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 Mrs Carrie Stephens against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00257/AS, dated 12 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling, land adjacent to 11 Hampden Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Hampden Road is characterised by two storey dwellings which are similar in style, design, layout and use of materials. They are set in modest sized plots and have well-proportioned front gardens. The predominant pattern of development comprises pairs of semi-detached dwellings with pitched roofs alternating with rows of four terraced dwellings. The end-of-terrace properties have distinctive front projecting gables. It would appear that originally each terrace and pair of semis had a symmetrical appearance.
 4. The houses are separated by good sized gaps which, although not identical in all cases, are a key characteristic of the street scene. The spaces around and between the dwellings ensures that the street does not appear enclosed. It is possible to look towards the rear gardens and glimpse trees in the area beyond the houses. On my site visit I also noted that many of the areas to the side of the houses provide parking space for vehicles, even when there is not a garage. These gaps therefore make a positive contribution to the area's appearance, its sense of spaciousness and the way in which it functions.
 5. The proposed dwelling would be attached to No 11 and would occupy the entire gap between the existing flank wall and the shared boundary with No 13. In my view this would make it appear cramped within this restricted space. The width of the house would be significantly less than that associated with other dwellings in the vicinity. The need for separate parking areas to serve the
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existing and new dwellings would reduce the area available for landscaping and would require the creation of two separate frontages, one of which would be significantly narrower than others in the street. Consequently, the house and its plot would fail to replicate the scale and proportions of other dwellings in the area. It would therefore appear incongruous and out of character with the surrounding street scene.

6. Where new development has taken place I accept that gaps between the buildings, for example between Nos 3b and 5, are not as generous as they were in the original layout of the area. However, the gap between those two dwellings is greater than that which would be retained between the proposed dwelling and No 13. I note that a side extension has been added to No 22 which fills the gap between its flank wall and the side boundary. However, this extension relates both physically and functionally to the host property and has not resulted in the sub-division of the plot. In addition, in that case there is a larger gap between the shared boundary and the flank wall of the adjacent property. I therefore consider that scheme is not directly comparable with the appeal proposal.
7. I appreciate that the appellant has engaged with the local authority in an attempt to find an acceptable way of providing an additional dwelling on the site. The appeal proposal is an amendment of previous schemes and has addressed concerns about the size of the proposed accommodation and the effect of the proposal on adjoining occupiers. However, I concur with the Council's assessment that these positive aspects of the current scheme do not overcome the harmful effects of introducing an additional dwelling onto this narrow and constrained plot.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies CS1 and CS9 of the Ashford Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy, which requires new development to respect its setting.
9. For this reason, and having regard to all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR