
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

by A Napier BA(Hons) MRTPI MIEMA CEnv

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

Decision date: 9TH December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E3525/D/16/3161701

23 Boxford Court, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 8JB

- 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 Nicholas Gant against the decision of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/0125/HH, dated 22 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2016.
 - The development proposed was originally described as '2 storey extension to the side; 2nd storey over existing property'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the proposal in the heading above is that given on the application form. The Council's decision notice indicates that the proposal was amended during the application process to reduce the two-storey side extension to single storey, reduce the overall scale of the first floor extension and incorporate a parapet wall to the roof. From the evidence provided, including the description of the proposal given on the appeal form, I am satisfied that this amended scheme was considered by the Council in its determination of the proposal. I intend to do the same with the appeal.
3. The appellant has suggested that further revisions to the scheme would overcome the concerns expressed by the Council. However, details of such possible alterations have not been provided and there is nothing before me to indicate that such revisions have been subject to wider publicity or were formally considered by the Council. As such and to avoid potential prejudice to the interests of others, I intend to consider the appeal on the basis of the scheme that was before the Council when it determined the application.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located within an established residential estate, the design of which segregates vehicles and pedestrians. The appeal dwelling is accessed by a network of footpaths, with a shared parking area to one side, and forms part
-

of a tightly-knit pattern of development, with the dwelling situated in close proximity to neighbouring properties. The built development in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site is predominantly comprised of two-storey terraced houses, with asymmetrical pitched roofs, which are situated within relatively modest gardens and linked by the footpath network and open spaces.

6. The appeal dwelling occupies a central location within a small group of neighbouring dwellings and is located in a prominent position within the streetscene, adjacent to the footpath network and a small area of open space. In contrast to most neighbouring properties, it is a single-storey building, with a steeply pitched lean-to roof, which adjoins the neighbouring dwelling to its front and the side. However, although of a materially different design to the otherwise largely homogenous surrounding development, due to its siting, roof slope, single-storey form and relatively modest scale, the appeal dwelling successfully complements the design and layout of other buildings nearby and makes a positive contribution to the local area.
7. The enlargement of the existing building, with the extension of the roof and addition of a first floor as proposed, would substantially increase the overall scale of the dwelling and fundamentally alter its form to that of a two-storey flat roof building, with single storey additions to the side and rear. As a result, the proposal would be a dominant and unsympathetic addition to the property, which would not respect its existing character, scale or design and would have a notably discordant visual impact. In addition, even with the parapet detail, the box-like form and bulky mass of the resulting dwelling would be in stark contrast to the form, design and appearance of other dwellings nearby. Due to the siting of the dwelling and the context of the site, this would be materially detrimental to the relationship of the appeal dwelling to those properties and would cause unacceptable harm to the streetscene.
8. My attention has been drawn to a number of other recent developments in the locality, some of which I saw on my visit to the area and which have a different appearance to more established properties nearby. Whilst I do not have full details of these developments or the background to those decisions, from the relatively limited information available to me, I am not satisfied that the siting, scale, design and respective relationship of these other examples to neighbouring development are directly comparable to those of the appeal proposal, which I have considered on its merits and in light of all representations made.
9. Accordingly, for the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the Council's *Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015* Policies DM2 and DM24, where they seek to protect local character and appearance. It would also not meet the aims of paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework, to achieve high quality design and take account of the different roles and character of different areas.

Other matters

10. Concerns have also been raised about the impact of the proposal on parking demand and the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. However, given my findings above, it is not necessary for me to consider these matters further as, even if I found in favour of the appellant in these respects, this would not address my findings of harm in relation to the main issue.

11. The appellant has also expressed concerns about the Council's approach to the planning application process and provision of advice. However, this is not a matter that is primarily before me in this appeal, but is an issue for the local planning authority in the first instance and, in any event, it would not outweigh the harm identified above or lead me to alter my findings in this respect.
12. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Napier

INSPECTOR