

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2017

by J Dowling BA(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 08 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/D/16/3165845

106 Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford TN25 4NT

- 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 A Ready against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01574/AS, dated 19 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey rear and side-wrap around extension including single storey rear element.
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Decision

1. This appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. On the planning application form the proposal was described as a rear and side wrap around extension with double height element. Prior to determining the application the Council amended the description to two storey rear and side-wrap around extension including single storey rear element. I consider that this more accurately reflects what is being proposed and I have therefore amended the banner heading accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Sandyhurst Lane is a long road that runs between the A2042 at its eastern end to the A20 to the west. As a result the character and appearance of the road varies along its length and there are a wide range of house types and designs ranging from bungalows to large detached houses. The appeal site is located mid-way along the lane and forms one half of a pair of semi-detached houses. The site is located adjacent to a vacant plot opposite which are open fields. As a result this part of the lane has a semi-rural feel. Whilst, there are a variety of house designs in the vicinity of the site I observed at my site visit that they are constructed of a similar palette of materials which informs the character and appearance of this part of Sandyhurst Lane.
 5. The council consider that the proposed single storey element is acceptable and that the proposal as a whole has been designed in such a way that the living conditions of neighbouring properties would not be adversely affected. I have no reason to disagree with this position.
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6. Unlike neighbouring properties the plot adjacent to No 106 is vacant. Although there is some planting along the boundaries of this plot I observed at my site visit that the existing side elevation of the appeal site is visible from Sandyhurst Lane. The proposed extension would be deeper than the original house and due to the proposed set back from the front elevation when combined with the existing house would result in a substantial side elevation of a considerable bulk and mass. Furthermore, in contrast to the original house the proposed extension would be constructed of white render which would further increase the visibility of the proposal within the streetscene. As a consequence the proposed two storey side and rear extension would be visually prominent and appear as an incongruous feature out of character with the streetscene.
7. Although No 106 and No 104 have been the subject of a number of alterations, including the conversion of a garage to a habitable room at No 106 and the erection of a single storey car port at No 104 these are of a minor nature and overall the symmetry of the pair has been retained. The proposed two storey side extension would erode this symmetry due to its bulk, mass and proposed use of render.
8. The appellant has made reference to a similar scheme at No 72 Sandyhurst Lane and cites this as setting a precedent for the proposal. However, both No 72 and the adjoining property are rendered; it is in a different part of the lane and as a result is perceived in a different context to the appeal site and therefore it does not lead me to a different view on this case.
9. I note from the Planning Officers report that they considered that the large proportion of glazing at the rear of the property was at odds with the design of the host property. However, I consider that whilst the proposed feature window is substantial, given its location at the rear of the property, views of this feature would be very limited and therefore it would not harm the character and appearance of the area.
10. As a result I conclude that the proposed extension due to its design, bulk and mass and the proposed use of render would adversely affect the character and appearance of the host property and the wider streetscene contrary to policies CS1 and CS9 of Ashford Borough Council Core Strategy (2008) and policies SP1 and SP6 of the Ashford Local Plan (2016) which advocate that development should be of a high quality design which responds to the prevailing character of the area. This is reinforced by the detailed guidance contained within the Supplementary Planning Guidance Domestic Extensions in Urban and Rural Areas (SPG10) (2004). These policies and the guidance are in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which advocates that development of a poor design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should be refused.
11. In their reason for refusal the Council have also referred to policy HOU8 of the emerging Ashford Local Plan. However, this plan is in the early stages of preparation and whilst it has been out for public consultation it has not been the subject of any robust testing. Therefore having regard to the advice

provided by the Framework¹ in coming to my conclusion I have attached no weight to these policies.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

Jo Dowling

INSPECTOR

¹ Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012)