

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2017

by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 8th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/17/3166399

31 Coopers Close, Chigwell IG7 6EX

- 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 Tony Bannister against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/EPF/2223/16, dated 16 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey front extension, two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and loft conversion with rear dormer.
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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 host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is located within a residential estate comprising detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings. No 31 is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling, forming a pair with No 29.
 4. The appeal site is an irregular shape with a relatively wide frontage which narrows to the rear. Consequently, there is a large side garden area, which is the proposed location of the two storey side extension incorporating a front gable and single storey porch.
 5. I accept the appellant's contention that due to the site's size, the proposed side extension could be accommodated without appearing cramped within its setting. The extension would, however, be of a significant size relative to the existing scale of No 31. The sideways projection would effectively double the width of the existing property across two storeys. Together with the front gable this would add considerable bulk and mass to what is at present a relatively modest well-proportioned dwelling.
 6. While No 29 has an existing side extension this is much smaller than the current proposal and is subordinate to the host dwelling, which would not be the case with the proposed addition to No 31. As such, the size of the
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extensions to front and side would upset the proportions of the existing property as well as unbalancing the appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings.

7. Front-facing gables are a feature of some nearby properties, but where these exist on semi-detached dwellings, such as at Nos 6 and 8 Coopers Close, the gable is central to the frontage of the pair. Therefore, while the design of the extension would reflect a feature within the surrounding area, its position on the frontage of a single dwelling of a conjoined pair would appear uncharacteristic and incongruous. This feature would accentuate the disproportionate size of No 31 compared to its immediate neighbour. Other examples of gables are to newer detached properties and, therefore, not directly comparable.
8. The proposed dormer window to the rear would be positioned below the roof ridge, above the eaves and inset to either side. It would not, therefore, dominate the roof due to its height or positioning. It would, however, cover most of the extended roof and so would be of considerable length, thereby accentuating the disproportionate size of the extended dwelling seen from the rear. Furthermore, box dormers are not common within the area and so this feature would draw the eye to the overall incongruous appearance of the extended dwelling, which would be visible from surrounding properties and their gardens. While there is a box dormer on a property diagonally opposite No 31, this serves to confirm my view of the harm that can be caused by such overly large or long extensions. While I am unaware of the circumstances which led to it being built, it should not be seen as a precedent for further harmful development.
9. The single storey rear extension would span around three quarters of the extended dwelling's width. However, due to its limited height and depth it would not add significant bulk or prominent additional development to the rear of the property. As such, no material harm would result from this element of the overall proposal.
10. I acknowledge the appellant's contention that there are examples of extended properties within the surrounding area, including Nos 25 and 27 Coopers Close. The side extension to No 25 is of considerable width but unlike the appeal proposal does not include a front gable. The extension to No 27 is smaller than the current proposal and like that to No 29 is subordinate to the host dwelling. The position of No 33 forward of No 31's front building line does not have a direct bearing on the harmful effects of an extension of the scale proposed here, particularly as No 33 has a different orientation. Despite the position of this dwelling, the harmful effects of the extended appeal property would be readily visible from the public realm and properties directly opposite. Therefore, these other examples are not directly comparable to the proposal and they do not lead me to reach a different overall conclusion. Moreover, there are no other examples of dwellings within the surrounding area that would be comparable to the scale and appearance of the extended appeal property.
11. Therefore, for all the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. As such, it is contrary to Policies DBE10 and

CP2(iv) of the Epping Forest Local Plan and Alterations, both of which require development including residential extensions to complement the setting and character of existing buildings and the surrounding area. Despite the age of the plan, these policies are broadly consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly section seven concerning good design.

12. I acknowledge that the proposed extensions are intended to create additional living space. However, these personal circumstances do not overcome the harm and conflict with development plan policies that I have found would result from the proposal.

Other Matters

13. I have had regard to a number of other matters raised by interested parties. While neighbouring residents have raised concerns about the possible effects of the extensions on their properties, the degree of separation from them means that only the adjoining dwelling, No 29, has the potential to be affected. However, the side extension would be sufficiently distant from the adjoining dwelling to avoid any overbearing or overshadowing effects.
14. There are already first floor windows with views across No 29's garden. While the dormer windows would also enable such views, this is not unusual in a suburban location such as this where views across neighbouring gardens are commonplace. The single storey rear extension would be deeper than No 29's rear conservatory but not of sufficient depth or height that it would appear overbearing from the neighbouring garden.
15. Conjecture about future occupation and behaviour, further development or property ownership are not matters for this appeal. Sufficient garden would remain without the need for additional landscaping. Matching materials to those of the existing property could be required by condition. There is no evidence from the plans or other submitted material to suggest that the foul drainage arrangements proposed are unusual or potentially harmful in relation to this domestic scale development. Any requirement for diversion of a mains sewer would require approval and is outside the scope of this planning appeal.
16. There is no evidence available to me that future parking arrangements would be harmful or that construction traffic could not be accommodated for a domestic scale extension such as proposed here. I have, therefore, had regard to all these matters but for the reasons given they have not had a direct bearing on the outcome of the appeal.
17. For the reasons given I conclude that that the appeal should not succeed.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR