

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 March 2017

by H Lock BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R3515/D/16/3163890

121 Lacey Street, IPSWICH, IP4 2PL

- 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 I Cole against the decision of Ipswich Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. IP/16/00778/FUL was refused by notice dated 14 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey side/ single storey rear extension and alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for two storey side/ single storey rear extension and alterations at 121 Lacey Street, IPSWICH, IP4 2PL, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref. IP/16/00778/FUL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 16/07/0100 and 16/07/0101 Revision A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matters

2. The appellant's name differs between the planning application and appeal forms, and I have used that given in the original submission to the Council.
 3. Although a plan revision was not listed at question 11 of the planning application form, the Council has confirmed that its decision related to drawing no. 16/07/0101 Revision A.
 4. Since the submission of the appeal, the Council has adopted the Ipswich Local Plan 2011-2031, which includes the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review (DPD). This Local Plan supersedes the Core Strategy and Policies DPD 2011. The reason for refusal includes Policies DM5 and DM12 of both documents, but for the avoidance of doubt I refer to the latest document in my decision.
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Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene and wider area.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is a semi-detached house in a residential area that is characterised by relatively close-knit housing. In particular, terraced housing is prevalent in Lacey Street and the wider area, albeit interspersed with semi-detached and the occasional detached property. The appeal property and the attached dwelling both have side garages and driveways. These create a greater sense of space between buildings than is commonly found in Lacey Street, but these gaps are atypical rather than being part of the natural spacing in the street scene.
7. Policy DM5 of the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review (DPD) requires all development to be well designed and sustainable, and this includes protecting and enhancing the special character and distinctiveness of Ipswich, and helping to reinforce the attractive physical characteristics of local neighbourhoods and the visual appearance of the immediate street scene. DPD Policy DM12 indicates that dwelling extensions should not lead to the creation of a terracing effect where there are not already terraces. This is supported by the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, 'Space & Design Guidelines' 2015 (SPD), which advises that two storey side extensions can damage the character of an area by closing the natural spacing between buildings and creating a 'terracing effect', and that first floor side extensions should be set back from the front of the house (by up to 4m to enable visible gaps to be retained), and where possible set-in from the side to provide adequate pedestrian access.
8. In this case, whilst the appeal property may be semi-detached, terraced housing is a characteristic feature of the area, and the proposal would not introduce an incongruous form of development into the street scene. Moreover, whilst it would close the existing side gap, it would not actually create terracing, as there is a pedestrian side passage on the neighbouring property, providing rear access to other dwellings in the terrace¹. It is acknowledged that the proposal would remove the potential for pedestrian side access on the appeal site itself, and I note the encouragement in the SPD to retain access to the rear of dwellings, but this alone would not be justification to resist the proposal.
9. The proposed side extension would be set back from the front of the house by 1950mm, and this combined with the lowered roof ridge height would minimise the impact on the host property and the wider street scene, and would ensure that some sense of space is retained. The single storey rear extension would be well-designed in itself and would have no impact on the street scene.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the street scene or the wider area, and would accord with the aims of DPD Policies DM5 and DM12, and the SPD.

¹ This is identified in the Council's officer report, which notes that the pedestrian alleyway serves as a rear garden access to several properties to the south-west of the site.

Other Matters

11. A third party representation was made on the planning application expressing concern that the proposed garage will not be used for parking and will exacerbate existing parking problems. Although the internal size of the proposed garage would be modest and the driveway depth would be reduced, on the evidence in this appeal I have no reason to consider that the proposal would have an adverse impact on local parking conditions.

Conditions

12. In addition to the standard time limit, I have attached a condition specifying the approved drawings as this provides certainty. It is also appropriate to control materials to match the existing dwelling, in order to safeguard the character and appearance of the development and the area.

Conclusion

13. The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and part of its environmental strand is to contribute to protecting and enhancing the built environment. A core planning principle of the Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design, and for the reasons given above the proposal would accord with this principle and would constitute sustainable development supported through the Framework. As a consequence, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR