
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2017

by Nick Palmer BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H1515/D/17/3168808

46 Walton Gardens, Hutton, Brentwood CM13 1EL

- 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 Paul Woodland against the decision of Brentwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01351/FUL, dated 10 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is "raise ridge, first floor rear extension with pitched and rear dormers to create first floor accommodation with roof lights and solar panels and replace front porch."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Following submission of the application the parties agreed an amended description from that given on the application form. I have used the description as given on the appeal form which is the same as that used by the Council in its officer's delegated report in the heading to my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in the appeal are:
 - i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - ii) the implications of the loss of a single storey dwelling.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property is a detached bungalow which dates from the mid-20th century and is on a road comprising other similar bungalows. It has a gabled roof and gabled front projection, an attached front garage and porch and a rear extension with flat roofs. The road rises so that the adjacent bungalow (Nº 48) is at a slightly higher level. It is proposed to carry out alterations to the roof of the dwelling to provide first floor accommodation. Those alterations would include a raised ridge height which would be level with that of the adjacent bungalow, a full-width rear first floor extension with a flat roof, a pitched roof
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over the rear extension and a partially altered front roof slope to extend over the garage and porch.

5. The proposed alterations would considerably change the appearance of the dwelling. The altered roof slope at the front would be prominent. This element in combination with the raised ridge would dominate the front of the building. It would obscure much of the original building and would not respect its scale and proportions. This part of the proposal would be disruptive in the street scene given that there is a unity of design along the road. The proposed roof lights and solar panels in the front roof slope would add to this disharmonious effect by giving a cluttered appearance and drawing attention to the incongruous design.
6. The rear first floor extension would also be prominent in that it would be seen from the street to both sides of the property. This element would be similarly dominant in terms of its bulk and its flat roof. Because it would replace the rear roof slope it would completely change the form of the building. The proposed pitched roof over the rear extension would add to the overall bulk and scale of the extensions.
7. The appellant has provided examples of other dwellings in the area which have pitched roofs over extensions, dormer windows, roof lights and solar panels. I saw some of the examples referred to on my visit. None of these other examples resemble the combination of large scale elements that are in the proposal before me however.
8. For the reasons given the proposed alterations would overwhelm the original design of the bungalow and would not therefore harmonise with either the existing building or the area. On this basis the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. It would not accord with saved policy CP1 of the Local Plan¹ (LP) in these respects.

Loss of Single Storey Dwelling

9. Saved policy H7 of the LP restricts extensions and alterations to existing bungalows to ensure that they remain as single storey dwellings. The background text to that policy recognises that conversions of the roof space do not necessarily need planning permission but justifies the policy on the basis of a high proportion of elderly people and a particular need for single storey accommodation.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends and the needs of different groups in the community and further that developments function well over their lifetime. Saved policy H7 is consistent with the Framework in as far as it requires provision for a specific type of housing to be retained but the approach is restrictive and does not allow for flexibility. This reduces the weight that I give to that policy but nevertheless that weight remains significant.
11. The appellant points out that the proposal would still allow an elderly person to occupy the dwelling as the ground floor accommodation would not be altered and there would be a bathroom at that level. The first floor could provide accommodation for a carer. There is no evidence before me to indicate that

¹ Brentwood Replacement Local Plan (2005)

the proposal is intended to be occupied in this way but this nonetheless weighs in favour of the proposal in that suitable accommodation for an elderly person would be retained.

12. The proposal would not conflict with saved policy CP1 of the LP which requires that there is no net loss of a residential unit. The proposal would not accord with saved policy H7 but I find that there would be no adverse effect in terms of the supply of housing for elderly people. This matter is neutral in the overall balance.

Conclusion

13. Notwithstanding my finding on the second main issue, my conclusion on the first main issue indicates that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Palmer

INSPECTOR