



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 October 2017

by Clive Tokley MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/17/3180357

47 St. Hilda's Way, Gravesend, DA12 4AL.

- 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 Mrs. Rachel Sparks against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20170309, dated 24 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and loft conversion.
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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 area.

Reasons

3. St Hilda's Way lies within an extensive housing development comprising a mix of mainly semi-detached houses and short terraces. Throughout the area there are variations in the design of the houses, including both hipped and gabled roofs, and external finishes. Recurring characteristics are the front elevational symmetry of the terraces and pairs and the regular gaps between the pairs and terraces. These aspects of the development contribute to the overall coherence and spatial character of the area.
4. No 47 St Hilda's Way lies at the western end of a terrace of four houses close to the junction with St Francis' Avenue. The terrace is symmetrically designed about a central access passage to the rear gardens. The two central houses have a common front wall plane with their front doors facing the road. The front walls of the two end houses are positioned forward of the central section. The break in the line of the front wall is reflected at roof level where the end houses have hipped roofs that project forward of the main roof plane creating architectural "bookends". At my site visit I saw a number of terraces with this distinctive design in nearby streets.
5. When approaching St Hilda's Way down the slope from St Francis' Avenue the full width of the terrace comes into view. From this direction the terrace is seen in conjunction with the neighbouring hipped-roof semi-detached pair (Nos 43 and 45) which is built at a lower level. The proposed gabled roof would be

beyond the forward projection of the hip. However that projection is small and despite the angle of view along the road the continuation of the ridge line and the front wall and roof planes would be clear to see.

6. From closer to the appeal property the proposed gable roof would create a high end wall and a bulky structure. These aspects of the proposal, combined with the difference of level and proximity to the boundary, would result in an abrupt transition between the gabled extended terrace and the adjacent hipped-roof semi.
7. The appellant points out the limited width of the road but the proposal would nevertheless be seen as part of the terrace. I consider that the proposal would detract from the overall symmetry and distinctive character of the terrace and, by significantly narrowing the gap between the terrace and the semi-detached pair, it would conflict with one of the defining spatial characteristics of the area.
8. The appellant refers to variations to the windows and front boundary treatments within the terrace but in my view these are secondary to the underlying character of both the terrace and the surrounding area. I saw the longer terraces in St Hilda's Way referred to by the appellant and the more extensive alterations that have been carried out to a number of dwellings within them; including new windows, solar panels and extensive paved driveways. However, in common with the other smaller terraces and semi-detached pairs that I saw, the terrace containing the appeal property has retained its original character.
9. The appellant points out that the appeal property is within a local authority housing development. Whilst this is not recognised as having any special architectural merit the area has a distinctive character which is particularly well expressed in the short terraces and hipped-roof semi-detached houses that are present in the vicinity of the appeal property.
10. I consider that the proposal would fail to conserve and enhance the character of the local built environment and would not integrate well with the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion

11. Taking account of all matters I have concluded that the proposal would unacceptably detract from the character and appearance of the area and that the appeal should not succeed.

Clive Tokley

INSPECTOR