

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 November 2017

by C J Leigh BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M2270/D/17/3181690

9 Nortons Way, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, TN12 6TB

- 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 Abby Welch against the decision of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/01519/FULL, dated 5 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 28 July 2017.
 - The development proposed is a side two storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property lies within an estate of housing, where houses are generally set a good distance back from the road. Whilst there is consistency in buildings fronting this road as it meanders around the estate, there are differences in the placing of houses, with some stretches of regular building line and other areas with staggered building lines.
4. No. 9 is in one such area, where the house is in a pair with No. 7 and these are set slightly further back from the neighbouring pair of houses at Nos. 11 & 13. I saw at my site visit that a number of other properties have been extended to the side, including some to their site boundaries, eg at Nos. 15, 40 and 46. Whilst these have been assimilated into the character of the area without any significant loss of open character, I noted this is as they have generally occurred where there is a greater degree of staggered building line to adjoining properties; that layout has ensured that a reasonable area of spaciousness has been retained next to those side extensions.
5. The proposed extension at No. 9 would be a two storey addition that would come to the side boundary of the site. Due to the more limited set-back from No. 11, this means the extended building of No. 9 would be notably closer to the building mass of its neighbour. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Alterations and Extensions (2006) says that the infilling of

the spaces between semi-detached houses with two-storey extensions could create a terraced appearance, and states that a 1m distance from the side wall of a side extension to the boundary is normally desirable (nb my reading of that guidance is with reference to effect on the streetscene, not just for maintenance purposes). I accept this distance is guidance, and stated as 'desirable' – not an absolute requirement – but in this instance I consider it to be a reasonable guide to avoiding the detrimental effect on the streetscene that the SPD envisages, ie a terracing effect.

6. The proposals in the current appeal would lead to an appreciable erosion of the spacious appearance between houses, and this would be harmful to the character of the area. Thus, conflict would occur with Policy EN1 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006, Core Policies 4 and 5 of the Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy 2010, and the guidance in the SPD.
7. The siting of the proposed extension would not cause any loss of privacy to neighbours. Although the extension would project further beyond the rear building line of No. 11, the distance to the rear of that property and the existing intervening garage to No. 11 would effectively screen the impression of the extension when seen from that property, so avoiding any overbearing impact. Notwithstanding these comments, the harm on the main issue is sufficient to outweigh other considerations and the appeal is dismissed.

C J Leigh
INSPECTOR