



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2017

by R Norman BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5th December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/W/17/3181028

Cornerways, The Green, Theydon Bois, Epping CM16 7JH

- 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 & Mrs Gillespie against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/3403/16, dated 22 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is the replacement of the existing dwelling house with a new single family dwelling house and new pavement crossover.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a prominent corner plot on the junction of The Green and Avenue Road. It is currently occupied by a detached, two-storey dwelling with associated garden and parking areas. The proposal would involve the demolition of this dwelling and its replacement with a new two-storey dwelling. The overall scale of the dwelling would be increased with the development extending further towards the side boundary with Avenue Road, and slightly further back into the site.
4. The site is bounded by hedging, trees and timber fencing at present. Directly adjacent to the site are other dwellings, fronting onto The Green and also Avenue Road. Opposite the site is a large area of green open space, Theydon Green, which allows wider views of the surrounding developments, and also allows views across towards the site, with some tree screening. On the opposite side of the Avenue Road junction is the Theydon Bois Baptist Church.
5. The surrounding area has a mixed character with various dwelling designs and scales present. Close to the site are two large buildings, the Telephone Exchange and the Church, which form the focal points within the immediate street scene. The area is characterised by domestic dwellings interspersed by larger public buildings. The proposed dwelling would have a contemporary appearance with a split level roof feature. Although the Green is very varied in

scale, design and materials, nevertheless the immediate dwellings still have a traditional quality to their overall character, with limited examples of modern design features present. The proposal would introduce a significantly more contemporary development into a prominent site. The design of the proposed dwelling has been influenced by the Church building on the opposite corner; however this building is distinct in the street scene and stands out as a public building rather than a dwelling. Whilst the height of the proposal would remain in keeping with the adjoining dwelling, the split level roofing would contrast with the more traditional rooflines and due to the prominence of the site, would create a development which would detract from the existing focal buildings and would not reflect the existing character and appearance of the dwellings along this part of The Green.

6. The prominence of the site is apparent when viewed from Theydon Green, the large area of open space located opposite the site. Although there are a number of trees lining the edge of this area of open space which would provide some screening from this angle, there would still be views of the site through the trees. As such, the existing trees would not be sufficient to mitigate the visual impact on the character and appearance of the area.
7. The side elevation of the proposed dwelling would sit closer to Avenue Road than the existing dwelling, with a single storey garage located directly adjacent to the boundary. It would also introduce elements of the first floor which would be set in from the side boundary and a sloping pitch feature. Whilst the overall increase in the scale over and above the existing dwelling would be relatively minimal in terms of its depth, the proposal would result in a wider dwelling. The combination of the contemporary design of the side elevation facing onto Avenue Road and the increased proximity to the side boundary would result in a dominant building which would be overly prominent within, and harmful to, the street scene. Although the side boundary treatment would remain, the proposal would include the blank flank wall of the garage sited up to, and forming part of, the side boundary which would also result in a dominant feature. The harm to the character and appearance of Avenue Road would, therefore, not be sufficiently mitigated by the boundary treatments.
8. Whilst the dwelling would remain in line with the front elevation of the existing dwelling, which would retain a sense of openness when viewed from The Green, when viewed from within Avenue Road the increase in built form of the proposed dwelling would have an enclosing effect given the prominence of the site and the overall design of the proposed dwelling. This would be harmful to the visual character when looking towards the open space and would result in a loss of openness from this viewpoint which would not be sufficiently mitigated by the retention of the trees within the site.
9. The proposed development would utilise timber and render for the external elevations and zinc roofing, which would contribute to giving the dwelling a lighter appearance. The use of timber and render are present on other properties in the surrounding area and materials in the wider area are varied. However, the acceptability of the materials would not be sufficient to mitigate against the harm to the character and appearance of the area as a result of the contemporary design and dominance of the proposed side elevation.
10. The proposed design, particularly in terms of the front and side elevations facing The Green and Avenue Road, would introduce a contemporary feature

which would fail to integrate with the existing street scene. As a result it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal therefore fails to accord with Policies CP2, CP7 and DBE1 of the Epping Forest District Adopted Local Plan and Alterations. These policies require new developments to respect their setting and adopt an appropriate significance within the street scene, and safeguard and enhancing the character and townscape and avoid unsympathetic change.

Other Matters

11. The proposed dwelling would add to the local housing stock by replacing an existing dwelling which is in need of renovation and modernisation, which would be a benefit to the area. However, this would be a limited benefit given that the development is for a single dwelling only, and as such is not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified above.
12. The appellant's aim to create a building of character and interest is noted. Whilst the existing dwelling is modest with few distinguishing features, resulting in a limited contribution to the street scene, the contemporary design proposed in this prominent location would be out of character with the surrounding area.
13. The appellant states that the dwelling is in need of extensive modernisation. The Council have not objected to the principle of a replacement dwelling on this site and I have no reason to disagree with this view.
14. The existing dwelling had a side extension approved previously, however this expired before being implemented.¹ Although this approval would have resulted in the built form extending closer to Avenue Road, it proposed a more traditional design which reflected the character of the existing dwelling on site. As such, I do not consider it comparable to the appeal scheme and in addition, as this permission has lapsed, I can give it only limited weight in my considerations of the scheme.
15. The appellant has identified a site at 14, Piercing Hill which has been extended to the side of the site. This site, however, is at some distance from the appeal site in an area which has different characteristics to the appeal site and as such is not wholly comparable to the appeal proposal. As such I can give this limited weight in my considerations.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Norman

INSPECTOR

¹ LPA Reference EPF/0323/92