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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 July 2019

**by Ian McHugh Dip TP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 1 August 2019**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/G2625/W/19/3226214**

**11 Press Lane, Norwich, NR3 2JY**

- 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 Ms Sarah Leggo against the decision of Norwich City Council.
  - The application Ref 18/01892/F, dated 19 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2019.
  - The development proposed is first floor front and rear extensions with single storey side extension and separation of single dwelling into 2 no. dwellings. New wall cladding, doors and windows.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. These are:
  - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and on the streetscene; and
  - Whether the proposal would provide adequate living conditions for the occupants of the proposed two bedroom dwelling, with particular regard to outlook and natural light.

### Reasons

#### *Character and Appearance*

3. The appeal property is an existing semi-detached dwelling with first floor dormer accommodation in the roof area. Press Lane contains a variety of house types in terms of ages, appearance and scale. Consequently, the streetscene does not have any particular distinctive or common characteristics. The Council states that the appeal property and the adjoining dwelling at number 10A Press Lane (number 10A) were originally one dwelling, which was sub-divided in the 1980's. Number 10A has been extended and altered by the construction of large dormer additions at the front and rear.
4. The proposal is to convert the existing appeal dwelling into two. One of the proposed dwellings would have two bedrooms and the other would have three. The existing building would also be enlarged at the front, rear and side with flat-roofed extensions. In addition, the existing rear garden would be sub-divided by fencing. The proposed Block Plan also shows one off-street car parking space to serve each dwelling at the front of the properties. The

- neighbouring property at Number 10A has an existing garage, which is positioned adjacent to the front of the appeal site.
5. Policies DM12 of the Council's adopted Development Management Policies Local Plan 2014 (LP) supports the conversion of buildings to residential use, subject to a number of criteria. These include a requirement that proposals should not have a detrimental impact on the character of the surrounding area. Furthermore, Policy DM3 of the LP seeks to deliver high quality design, which includes the avoidance of dominant or incongruous extensions. Policy 2 of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (CS) also promotes good design.
  6. In my opinion, these policies accord with the provisions of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which promotes good design; and a requirement that developments add to the overall quality of the area.
  7. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the mixture of architectural styles in the surrounding area, together with the existence of the relatively large dormer extensions at number 10A. However, I am not persuaded that the extensions at 10A should create a precedent for the extensions proposed by the appellant.
  8. The existing appeal dwelling has retained a relatively simple and small scale 'cottage style' appearance, particularly at the front. Because of this, it sits comfortably and unobtrusively within the site and its surroundings. The proposal would add significantly to the scale of built development at the appeal site and, in my opinion, the extensions would overwhelm the property at the front and rear due to their proposed bulk, height and overall mass. Furthermore, the narrow vertical windows and the use of vertical timber boarding would appear at odds with the neighbouring property and with the streetscene generally. Overall, I consider that the extensions would appear incongruous and unsympathetic to the existing building and to the streetscene.
  9. The Council also contends that the increased intensity of the use and the need to provide parking, manoeuvring space, together with storage space for refuse bins for two properties in front of the dwellings would result in a cramped and inappropriate layout. Incidentally, I note that no objections have been raised by the Council's Transportation Officer in respect of parking and manoeuvring space.
  10. The existing forecourt area at the appeal site is hard surfaced and is available for car parking in connection with the existing dwelling. In addition, it provides access to an existing garage that currently serves the property, the door of which is positioned at right angles to the forecourt. I consider that the subdivision of the site (notwithstanding the fact that no fencing is proposed) would lead to a cramped and congested entrance into the site and would create difficulties in accessing the garage and the manoeuvring/outside storage areas.
  11. For the above reasons, I conclude on this issue that the proposal would fail to achieve high quality design and that it would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and to the streetscene. Consequently, it would conflict with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and with the provisions of the Framework, as referred to above.

### *Living Conditions*

12. The front entrance to the proposed two bedroom dwelling would be via new steps that would lead down from the existing forecourt area. The entrance into the dwelling itself would be through relatively wide, full height glazed sliding doors that would lead into an open-plan kitchen/dining/lounge. The main aspect from the lounge area would be towards the rear garden, with the kitchen at the front of the proposed dwelling.
13. Because the dwelling would be at a lower level than the forecourt and existing garage (which would be relatively close to the front of the property), the Council considers that the outlook from the front of the dwelling would be poor and that it would suffer from inadequate levels of natural light.
14. Policy DM2 of the LP states (amongst other things) that development will only be permitted where it provides a high standard of amenity, including adequate levels of light and outlook, for future occupiers. This policy is consistent with paragraph 127 f) of the NPPF, which states that planning decisions should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
15. I consider that the outlook from, together with levels of natural light into the proposed kitchen area would be somewhat restricted, because of the ground levels and close proximity of the existing garage. However, I am not persuaded that this would be unacceptably harmful to the living conditions of the proposed occupants, because of the dual aspect of the ground floor and because the most affected area would be the working area of the kitchen where outlook and natural light is, in my opinion, less important. Consequently, I conclude on this issue that the proposal would not conflict with the Development Plan or with the Framework.

### **Other Matter**

16. Representations have been received from the occupants of number 10A, regarding potential difficulties in accessing their garage, which is positioned adjacent to the appeal site entrance. There is also a dispute as to whether a vehicle can be parked in the garage, because of the angle of the garage door. In addition, reference is made to the occupants of number 10A having to cross land owned by the appellant, in order to gain access into the garage.
17. I consider these issues to be a matter between the parties and they do not influence my decision, which is based on the planning merits of the case.

### **Conclusion**

18. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Ian McHugh*

INSPECTOR