



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 August 2019

by L Crouch BA (Hons) MSc IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/19/3229988

Greenways, Tunstall Road, Tunstall ME10 1YG

- 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 and Mrs Buck against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/501216/FULL, dated 10 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is to remove existing garage and replace with a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Greenways is a detached two storey dwelling set within a spacious plot. The appeal site lies on a section of Tunstall Road which is mainly characterised by well-proportioned detached dwellings set comfortably within their plots. This generally allows for gaps in-between buildings. This gives an overall open character to the surrounding area.
4. From my site visit I saw that the dwelling has a pebble dash render finish, applied timber framing within a gable feature and a two storey bow window. This gives the front elevation a well-balanced and attractive appearance which is visible within the street scene. There is an ancillary single storey garage to the side of the property. Due to its smaller scale and detached character it enables a spacious gap between the dwelling and the neighbouring dwelling Chevington House.
5. The proposed two storey extension would increase the width of the dwelling by approximately half again, and a similar depth. The front elevation of the extension would be set back from the adjacent bow window. However, this would only be marginally, and it would project forward of the majority of the rest of the elevation. The extension would have a matching eaves line and the ridge would be stepped down, but not significantly, and would form a small area of flat roof. Overall this would result in an extension which is of a significant scale and not subservient in form.

6. The proposed scale and form would harmfully diminish the sense of space around the dwelling, which would be accentuated by the proposed design. The design includes a complicated, untraditional roof form, which results in a small flat roof section and a roof valley where it joins the main house. It also includes overly square proportions which would be contrary to the well-balanced appearance, and un-traditional detailing which lacks the architectural visual interest of the main house.
7. As a result of the scale and form the proposed extension would lie in close proximity to the boundary and would in-fill the important gap between Greenways and Chevington House. This gap provides a spacious setting for the dwelling and its neighbour. Its loss, although not creating a 'terracing' effect, would still result in an incongruous, cramped appearance within the street scene. With the extension being approximately only 1m to the side boundary of Chevington House. The loss of this openness would have a negative impact on, and be at odds with, the surrounding area's well-established spacious character and appearance.
8. I recognise that the appellants considers the proposal to be well-designed, relate well to the street scene and be visually in-keeping with the dwelling and neighbouring dwellings, with sufficient separation. However, I consider the proposed development by virtue of its significant scale, appearance and form would result in an unacceptable visually dominating extension in relation to the dwelling, which would diminish the gap to the neighbouring property and have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
9. Consequently, I find the appeal proposal would harm the character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area. As such it would conflict with Policies CP4, DM14 and DM16 of the 'Bearing Fruits 2031' The Swale Borough Local Plan adopted 2017. These policies collectively seek to ensure high quality, sympathetic design appropriate to the building and its surroundings. There would also be conflict with the principles set out in the accompanying Swale Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance for Designing an Extension- A Guide for Householders (undated) (SPG), which seeks well-designed extensions.

Other Matters

10. The appellants have drawn my attention to other dwellings which are closer than 2m to the neighbouring boundary. The SPG recommends that a 2m gap would 'normally' be required between a first floor extension and the side boundary, and as such is a guideline in order to preserve spaciousness. I could see from my site visit and from the evidence before me that the examples provided have different site characteristics to the appeal site. A garage separates Willow House and Corner House, and there is a staggered arrangement in the building line between Willow House and Dunsden, which is also the case between No 78 Borden Lane and its neighbours. These all result in a sense of space being maintained. In any event, I must assess the case before me on its own merits.
11. I note from the appellants' statement that they have been encouraged by the Council to reduce the scale of the extension in order to increase the gap, but this revision does not meet their needs. I give this matter only limited weight and insufficient to offset the significant harm I have otherwise identified.

12. The appellants have identified that the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (the Framework) is supportive of development. However, given the harm that I have found on character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area, and having regard to the Framework's clear emphasis on good design, I do not consider the development acceptable overall.

Conclusion

13. The appeal is dismissed.

L Crouch

INSPECTOR