
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2019

by Richard Aston BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Wednesday, 25 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A2280/D/19/3235063

5 Sallow Close, St Mary's Island, Chatham ME4 3HG

- 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 Manjet Samrai against the decision of The Medway Council.
 - The application Ref MC/19/0013, dated 1 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is single storey front extension and rear extension and 2 storey side extension.
-

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 host property and area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is part of a larger residential development, consisting of a variety of types and sizes of dwellings within attractive terraces, groups and detached dwellings of a vernacular architecture reflective of its maritime setting and context. In combination with mature trees and landscaping within the public realm and side and front gardens this positively contributes to the attractive character and appearance of the area. The host property is a 2 storey end of terrace dwelling in a row of 4 dwellings, with the 2 middle dwellings being 3 storeys in height and of a larger scale. As one approaches the site from both directions along Island Road East, a primary route through the development, the side and rear elevations of the host property are very prominent and the terrace as a whole is a conspicuous and dominant building within the streetscene.
4. The proposal would extend built form beyond the rear building line of the terrace and noticeably to the side at first floor level. Although not excessively so, this would disrupt the symmetry of the host building. The rear hipped gable, elongated roof and larger expanse of blank side wall would sit in stark visual contrast to the form of the host property and the matching and unaltered property on the opposite side of the terrace. Such a marked change would unbalance the existing uniformity of the terrace and harmfully diminish the contribution that it makes to the visual cohesion of the terrace and the character and appearance of the area.

5. Despite the use of matching materials and detailing, the overall combination of the site's prominence, the proximity of the proposed building to its side/rear boundary and its overall design would result in an unduly prominent and incongruous addition to the streetscene. The eye would be unacceptably drawn to it and in such a context the proposal would not represent a satisfactory or high quality of design. It is not determinative that the Chatham Maritime Trust did not object to the proposal because I must form my own view on an issue where there is an element of subjectivity.
6. Turning to the fence, in a development of consisting of combinations of brick walling and metal railings with substantial boundary hedgerows and landscaping, the introduction of a timber fence per se could be a visually jarring addition to the streetscene. However, the appellant intends to erect the fence behind the hedge and subject to a condition requiring the retention of the existing tall hedgerow at a height consistent with the fence, along with its long term maintenance, this element of the proposal could be made acceptable and would not be a reason to dismiss on these grounds alone.
7. Nonetheless, for the reasons given above the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and area. It would conflict with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan insofar as it requires the design of development to be appropriate in relation to character and appearance of the built environment in terms of its scale, mass and proportions and respects buildings, spaces and the visual amenity of an area. The proposal would also conflict with the design objectives of National Planning Policy Framework's ('the Framework'), which are consistent with this approach.

Other Matters

8. An alternative application has been made by the appellant to the Council but this is of no relevance to the consideration of the proposal before me. I also acknowledge the appellant's desire to increase the living accommodation for a growing family but the benefits from this would not outweigh the harm that I have identified. My attention has been drawn a similar proposal at 25 Sallow Close¹ but I have not been provided with the full details. I cannot therefore be certain the circumstances are directly comparable to the proposal before me and in any event each case must be considered on its own merits. I also observed that property is in a much less prominent location. Thus none of these other considerations, on their own or in combination, alter my view.

Conclusion

9. The proposal would conflict with the development plan, when read as whole. Material considerations, including the Framework do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Having considered all other matters raised I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Aston

INSPECTOR

¹ LPA ref: MC/11/1865.