



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2019

by M Heron BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/19/3234980

21 The Crescent, Loughton IG10 4PY

- 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 Rikki O'Sullivan against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/1014/19, dated 17 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension to create new bedrooms, bedroom within new roof and new entrance porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development given in my formal decision omits some of the text from the description provided in the planning application form. The omitted text simply states that the proposal would provide accommodation for an extended family, and as such it does not describe acts of development.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area; and
 - the supply of housing for older residents.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The Crescent is a residential street characterised by a mix of property types. However, No 21 is a single storey bungalow which is located in the middle of a row of five bungalows. These properties are all similar in height and are constructed under hipped roofs. In addition, each has a small projecting front porch which is largely glazed. This common design gives this particular section of the street a strong sense of rhythm and uniformity.
5. The proposal seeks full planning permission for a first floor extension and a new entrance porch. This scheme would raise the height of No 21 so that it would be read as a two storey dwelling with a hipped roof to the front and a

gabled roof to the rear. I appreciate that such a property would be similar in terms of bulk and mass compared to others within the wider streetscene. Nevertheless, it would be significantly taller and bulkier than adjacent bungalows and its roof form would be wholly out of character with them. I therefore find that the proposal would disrupt the rhythm and uniformity of this section of the streetscene.

6. Moreover, the proposed porch would be deeper than the existing porch, as well as those at adjacent properties, and its height would be relatively close to the eaves level of the extended host property. Its considerable bulk and mass would also be exacerbated by its predominately rendered finish. Consequently, in my view this feature would appear as an unduly dominant addition to the host property that would reinforce its overall incongruity with neighbouring bungalows.
7. I appreciate that the footprint of the host property would be largely unaltered and that sufficient gaps would remain at either side of it. Nonetheless, taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposal's size and design would introduce a conspicuous feature to the appeal site which would fail to integrate effectively with the rhythm of adjacent built form. This would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the street as a whole. Existing planting and the use of appropriate materials would not significantly diminish the scheme's harmful impact.
8. My attention has been drawn to developments at Nos 30 and 33 The Crescent. However, both of these developments are adjacent to two storey properties. Consequently, they are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal, which I have assessed on its own individual merits. There may also be examples of dwellings that have been extended in a manner similar to that proposed within the wider area. However, in the absence of details about their locations or how they were assessed, they carry little weight in my assessment of the appeal scheme.
9. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with Policy DBE10 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan (LP). Amongst other things, this seeks to ensure that residential extensions compliment and, where appropriate, enhance the appearance of the existing building and the streetscene. The proposal would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) insofar as it seeks to ensure that developments function well and add to the quality of the area. The Council's decision notice refers to Policy DBE9 of the LP. However, this deals with living conditions and is therefore not relevant to this main issue.
10. In addition, the Council's decision notice refers to emerging Policies SP3, DM9 and DM10 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version (LPSV). Amongst other things these seek to promote high quality design which respects the form of the original building and enhances the character of existing settlements. There is therefore also conflict with these emerging policies. However, no material has been supplied regarding the status of any unresolved objections to them. On the evidence before me, with regard to paragraph 48 of the Framework, I afford the conflict with these emerging policies only limited weight in my assessment.

Housing Supply for Older Residents

11. The Council's officer report refers to the increasing population of older people within the District. It also states that there has been an erosion of the Council's stock of bungalows which play an important role in meeting the housing needs of such residents. This evidence is not contested by the appellant. In response to this, Policy H1 of the LPSV specifically seeks to resist the loss of bungalows. This is consistent with the Framework's aim of delivering housing of differing sizes and types to meet the needs of different groups in the community, including older people.
12. I accept that the proposal would comply with Part M of the building regulations. However, I have no substantive evidence before me to show that it would better assist those living with reduced mobility or the elderly when compared to the existing property. Overall, there is nothing substantive before me to suggest that the stock of bungalows in the District is now adequate and the proposal would result in the unacceptable loss of such a property. The cumulative loss of bungalows would, over time, harm the Council's objectives of maintaining and increasing the supply of units that are suitable for older residents.
13. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would adversely affect the supply of housing for older residents. It would therefore conflict with emerging Policy H1 of the LPSV. For reasons discussed in my first main issue, this conflict attracts only limited weight. Nevertheless, the scheme would also conflict with the Framework's aim of providing a range of housing to meet the needs of the community.

Other Matters

14. I appreciate that the proposal would provide accommodation close to services and facilities to provide care for the appellant's father, who's health has deteriorated. Whilst I sympathise with the appellant in this regard, I have no substantive evidence before me to show that this could not be achieved through a scheme which would be less harmful to the character of the area and the Council's supply of homes for older residents. This is therefore not a reason to set aside the identified harm.
15. I also note that the proposal would be acceptable in that it would make the property more energy efficient and would not harm the living conditions at neighbouring dwellings. However, these are requirements of the development plan and are not justification for permitting a scheme which I have found to be harmful.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations, including the advice of the Framework, which outweigh this conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Heron

INSPECTOR