

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 November 2019

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/19/3237820

Harbar 8 Branksome Avenue, Stanford Le Hope, Essex, SS17 8AZ

- 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 V Frogley against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00800/HHA, dated 24 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension and first floor rear extension with roof alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor side extension and first floor rear extension with roof alterations at Harbar 8 Branksome Avenue, Stanford Le Hope, Essex, SS17 8AZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/00800/HHA, dated 24 May 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: SL 18.09.211-01, 02 & 07-P1.

Preliminary Matters

2. I use the Council's description of development which is more concise than the application forms; I note the Appellant also uses this on the appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is detached two storey house on a sizeable rectangular plot fronting a road which is characterised by a mix of styles of detached
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homes which include single and two storey properties. The streetscene is one of a good quality residential area with properties set back from the road and the varied appearance of the buildings and gardens coming together to create an area with aesthetic quality. The proposal is as described above and is principally an enlargement of an existing two storey side element, which is presently subservient, into a form which would match the scale of the main house.

5. The Council is concerned that the first floor part of the side extension, given its scale and relationship with the neighbouring bungalow, would be incongruous and an overly dominant feature in the street scene.
6. One can see how the existing 'stepped down' side element on the appeal property forms something of a transition between the main two storey host property and the neighbouring bungalow. However the question I have to ask is does this transition form an essential element in the streetscene and would the character of the area be harmed by, on the face of it, a more contrasting interface?
7. I note above the variety within this street and in any event the set-back of buildings from the road. It has to be said there is no great pattern of distances kept from side boundaries, heights being graded, roof types being as one, or upper level spaciousness or consistency. Houses do abut bungalows and this and other variety in the street is a characteristic which does not detract from the overall sense of a pleasing scene and a good quality residential area. To my mind in this context the proposed change at the host property would go largely unnoticed in the wider picture and would not appear strange, eye-catching or aesthetically out of place. The works would relate well to the existing property and would not be visually inappropriate to sit alongside a bungalow on this particular road in this set of circumstances.
8. Policies PMD2 and CSTP22 of the adopted the Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development 2015 are relevant. Taken together and amongst other matters they seek designs which sensitively respond to surroundings and contribute positively to local townscape and have regard to local context. I conclude that the appeal scheme would not run contrary to these policies. The Thurrock Residential Alterations and Extension Design Guide (RAE) SPD 2017 includes similar objectives. Whilst the SPD cannot be expected to cover every eventuality I conclude that there would be no conflict with its aims in respect of the protection of character and appearance of an area.

Conditions

9. The Council suggests the standard commencement condition along with the requirement for materials to match the existing building. I agree this latter condition would be appropriate in the interests of visual amenity. I also agree that there should be a condition that works are to be carried out in accordance with listed, approved, plans; to provide certainty. On the question of these plans, I should add that the Appellant indicated a possible wish to change the proposed plan but I do not have anything further and I can only determine what is before and was assessed by the Council at the time of its decision. The Appellant should contact the Council should any amendments be sought.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would not have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the locality. Accordingly the appeal is allowed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR