



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2019

by Conor Rafferty LLB (Hons), AIEMA, Solicitor (Non-practising)

Decision by Chris Preston BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H1515/D/19/3233461

47 Hatch Road, Pilgrims Heath, CM15 9PU

- 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 James Williams against the decision of Brentwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00444/FUL, dated 26 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is the addition of a first floor with dormer windows to the existing bungalow; the increase in the width of the existing rear extension to the full width of the property (depth to remain as is); installation of a pitched roof; and the removal of the existing prefabricated garage to the side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The description of the development provided in the application form refers to the removal of the existing prefabricated garage to the side of the dwelling. However, it was clear from the site visit that this garage has already been removed. Nonetheless the appeal is to be determined on the basis of the plans provided to the Council as part of the application.

Main Issue

4. The main issues are the effect of the development on (i) the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and (ii) the living conditions of neighbouring residents at 45 Hatch Road with particular regard whether it would have an overbearing impact.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site is located on the south side of Hatch Road and comprises a single storey bungalow which benefits from an extension to the rear. The surrounding area is characterised by the residential nature, where dwellings vary in terms of

style, design and materials. However, the immediate surrounding part of the street is largely made up of modest sized dwellings which are primarily single storey properties or remodelled bungalows with first floor dormer windows additions to the roof. Travelling further to the east and west along Hatch Road two storey dwellings are also present. The appeal site, although slightly dated in style, contributes positively to the surrounding area by nature of its scale and massing which reflects the predominant style of the street.

6. The proposed development includes the remodelling of the bungalow to include a first floor extension and two storey rear extension, which would increase the dimensions of the property from both a footprint and height perspective. Saved Policy CP1 of the Brentwood Borough Local Plan, adopted in August 2005 states that development should not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It further states that extensions and alterations to buildings should be of a high standard of design and be compatible with the location, surrounding development and existing building in terms of size, style, siting, scale, design and materials.
7. Whilst the proposal would retain a symmetrical front façade, akin to the existing property, the scale of the development would not respect the current character or proportions of the property or the immediately surrounding properties. In effect, the modest bungalow would be replaced by a two-storey dwelling with a much more imposing scale which would appear disproportionate in the context of the property.
8. Whilst I recognise that there are other two storey properties in the wider area the proposal is situated in the middle of a run of modest bungalows and dormer bungalows. The neighbouring property has been enlarged but the dormer windows are set within the roof and the overhanging eaves terminate immediately above the ground floor bay windows. From the examples provided, that is a common way in which local bungalows have been extended whilst retaining some of the original character. In other words, the property still retains the character of a bungalow, albeit with rooms in the roofspace. In contrast, the proposal in this case would effectively create a two storey front façade with a much taller front elevation where the half dormers would be flush with the front elevation, rather than set back in the roofspace. The resulting dwelling would appear disproportionate in the context of the site itself but would also reduce the sense of coherence with the wider streetscene.
9. The visual impact would be heightened through the use of the two-storey glazed bay/ entrance porch which would be a substantial feature of itself and would introduce a style and overtly modern design that that would not respect the surrounding character. The result would be a two-storey dwelling with an imposing and somewhat alien projecting gable set amongst a run of more modest bungalows and dormer bungalows. It would be a discordant and incongruous addition on account of its scale and design.
10. Consequently, whilst I recognise that the existing property is dated and may benefit from a sensitively designed refurbishment, the scale and design of the proposal in question would appear disproportionately large, having regard to the context of the existing property and the pattern of development in the area, particularly those properties immediately surrounding the site. The proposal would therefore have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the

surrounding area. Accordingly, it would fail to comply with Saved Policy CP1(i) and (iii) of the Brentwood Borough Local Plan, adopted in August 2005

Living conditions

11. The appeal property is located in close proximity to the side elevation of No. 45, separated by a boundary fence and narrow passageway at either side. The proposal would increase the built development that runs alongside this boundary, introducing a two-storey rear extension that would increase the overall depth and height of the property at this location.
12. The single storey rear elevation of No. 45 projects beyond that of the appeal property and would continue to do so following the development of the proposal. Nonetheless the development would be situated close to the side elevation of No. 45, where windows and an entrance door are located. When viewed from the rooms containing those windows and when entering or exiting No. 45 by this entrance door, the side elevation of the proposal would feel overbearing by nature of its scale and proximity.
13. Furthermore, the raised ridgeline of the roof and fully glazed two storey rear extension along the entire width of the property would also appear overbearing from the rear garden of No. 45. When experienced alongside the modest single storey dwelling at No 45, the proposal would appear unduly dominant from this viewpoint, increasing the overbearing feeling of the development and affecting the amenity of the occupiers of this neighbouring dwelling.
14. Due to the proposed location of the proposal close to the boundary with No. 45 and the difference in floor levels between the proposal and the neighbouring dwelling I consider that the proposed development would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the general amenities of the occupiers of No. 45 by way of overbearing effect so as to cause harm to the living conditions of those occupiers. Accordingly, it would fail to comply with Saved Policy CP1(ii) of the Brentwood Borough Local Plan, adopted in August 2005.

Other considerations

15. The appellant has referred to other development within the wider vicinity where extensions and dormer windows have been granted planning permission. However, this proposal should be assessed on its own site-specific circumstances. For the reasons set out above, I have identified harm on the basis of the very specific relationship with neighbouring properties and I am not satisfied that those site-specific circumstances will be directly replicated elsewhere. Consequently, reference to other extensions nearby does not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. I recognise that there would be benefits to refurbishing the property and that the principle of a sensitive extension is not in question. However, the proposal in this instance is contrary to the relevant policies of the development plan having regard to its scale and design and the effect on neighbouring living conditions. There is no reason to suppose that the benefits of refurbishing the property could not be achieved through an alternative scheme that would not cause harm in those respects. Consequently, having had regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Rafferty

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR