



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2020

by Ian Harrison BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L2250/D/19/3239345

53 Holywell Avenue, Folkestone, Kent CT19 6JY

- 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 Chris Darby against the decision of Folkestone and Hythe District Council.
 - The application Ref Y19/0784/FH, dated 6 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey rear and side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Although Part E of the Appeal Form states that the description used in the application form has not been changed, the appeal form and the Council's decision notice include a different description. The description used by the main parties in the more recent documents is consistent, accurate and concise and I have therefore used that description in the heading above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within a residential area that consists of two storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings and taller buildings containing flats. Although some of the dwellings have been the subject of extensions and minor alterations, they have a largely consistent appearance. Single storey, flat roofed buildings are an established feature of the area in the form of extensions to dwellings and detached garage blocks. However, most extensions are set back from the front elevation of the dwelling to which they are attached and are subservient to the main dwelling in terms of width. As a result of the gaps between dwellings, the recessed position of garage blocks and the space at the junctions within the road, there is a degree of spaciousness surrounding the buildings that is a positive feature of the locality.
5. The dwelling at the appeal site is the last of a terrace of 5 dwellings. At the side of the dwelling is a small area of hardstanding that is included within the appeal site, to the rear of which is an electricity substation that is mostly enclosed with brick walls. Due to the changing ground levels of the locality,

the substation is set substantially below the dwelling at the appeal site. An access road that leads to a parking and garage court is adjacent to the site.

6. The proposed side extension would align with the front elevation of the existing dwelling, project beyond the existing rear elevation and be built in close proximity to the adjacent access road. Although it would be single storey, the width and depth of the extension would cause it to appear as a substantial addition to the host dwelling. The extension would feature a flat roof and a garage door to the front elevation, albeit with no hardstanding or vehicle access provided in front of the extension.
7. The alignment of the extension with the frontage of the existing dwelling and its position at the end of the terrace causes the extension to be a prominent addition to the dwelling. In this regard, without any access or hardstanding in front of it, the garage door would have an incongruous appearance. Furthermore, by extending beyond the existing rear elevation, the extension would be poorly integrated with the host dwelling and, as there would only be a small window offering any relief to the long side elevation, the extension would have a particularly bulky appearance.
8. The extension would impinge on the space at the side of the dwelling and erode the abovementioned spaciousness of the area. In addition, due to the changing ground levels, the rear elevation of the extension would have to be taller than the front and would be significantly taller than the electricity substation. This element of the proposal would be conspicuous from the nearby parking area and would cause the extension to have a contrived appearance. For these reasons, the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street.
9. Although other extensions exist within the locality, I have not been provided with sufficient details of their planning history to be able to afford them more than minimal weight. In any event, none of the other extensions appear to be comparable to the proposal in terms of width, depth and prominence and most of the extensions are set back from the front elevation of the host dwelling. The nearby extension at 18 Holywell Avenue is most alike the extension hereby proposed but is less prominent in the locality and has a different scale and appearance. Accordingly, the other extensions that have occurred within the surrounding area do not lead me to conclude that planning permission should be granted for this proposal.
10. I have been provided with details of other developments within the Folkestone and Hythe District that have been granted planning permission.¹ However, these are a significant distance from the appeal site and do not appear to be directly comparable in terms of the nature of the proposals or their context. They do not therefore represent a reason to grant planning permission at this site.
11. Whilst paragraphs 117 and 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) promote the effective use of land and encourage multiple benefits being derived from the use of land, as this proposal relates to the extension of a dwelling, the benefits arising in this regard are minimal. Furthermore, whilst paragraph 127 of the Framework encourages the provision of a high standard

¹ Y19/0309/FH at 18 Woodlands Drive, Hythe, Y19/0112/FH at Cedar Bank, Dymchurch Road, New Romney and Y18/1184/FH at 5 The Priory, Queens Road, Lydd.

of amenity for future and existing residents, that paragraph also requires development to be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. As such, taking the Framework as a whole, the limited benefits arising from the proposal do not outweigh the harm that would be caused.

12. For these reasons, the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. The development would, therefore, be contrary to policies BE1 and BE8 of the Shepway District Local Plan Review 2006 which combine to require that development is of a high standard of layout and design, reflects the scale proportions and detailing of the original building and accords with existing development in the locality in terms of building form, mass, height and elevational details. The proposal would also be contrary to paragraph 127 of the Framework which requires development to be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.
13. I have not been provided with sufficient evidence in relation to the status of emerging policy HB8 of the Places and Policies Local Plan (2018) to be able to afford it more than minimal weight. In any event, as far as it would be relevant to this proposal, it appears to have a similar aim to the existing policies of the development plan and would, therefore, not lead me to reach a different conclusion in respect of the proposed development.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian Harrison

INSPECTOR