



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 February 2020

by Martin Chandler BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/19/3235429

62 Cheyne Walk, Meopham, Gravesend DA13 0PG

- 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 Russell Sands against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20190383, dated 14 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is double storey front extension to enlarge bedroom on first floor and form shower with lobby on the ground floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - ii) the living conditions for the occupants of neighbouring properties.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site consists of a two-storey dwelling located at the end of a terrace of five similar properties. Although the adjoining neighbour is located in the same plane as the appeal building, the other three houses in the terrace step back in a consistent manner, creating a staggered appearance to the terrace. The houses are faced with tile hanging at first floor level and have generous window openings to the front of the properties. It is an architectural style that is replicated in a neighbouring terrace of houses immediately to the north of the appeal site. Additionally, a terrace of a similar form and appearance is located opposite the site.
4. The presence of these houses establishes a strong, albeit simple uniformity within the immediate context of the appeal site. Variation does exist within the surrounding houses with the presence of front extensions. However, overwhelmingly, these are single storey, small scale additions that are subordinate in scale and appearance to the existing houses. Accordingly, these ground floor extensions do not compromise the uniformity of the terraced properties.

5. The proposal would introduce a front extension. However, unlike the existing examples in the street, the addition would be two storeys in height. It would seek to complement the tile hanging effect to the front, but, due to the height and prominence of the proposed extension, it would represent a dominant and imposing addition to the existing house. Accordingly, it would be distinctly at odds with the prevailing uniformity within the immediate locality. This would have a significant and demonstrably harmful effect on the street scene, a matter to which I attach great weight.
6. Beyond the appeal site, the architecture of the existing houses does vary moreso and there are also many examples of front extensions. However, as with the immediate neighbours, these extensions are generally limited to the ground floor. Accordingly, they remain subservient to the form of the host dwellings and therefore, I attach very little weight to their presence.
7. The proposal would also improve the quality of the accommodation for the appellant and his family. This would primarily represent a private, albeit social benefit, however, such an approach would seek to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of making effective use of land. Nevertheless, due to the scale of the development, I attach limited weight to this matter.
8. For the reasons identified above, the proposal would significantly compromise the uniformity of the immediate context in a manner that would be harmful to the street scene. It would therefore not represent an innovative or sensitive design approach. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore fail to accord with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) (CS) which, amongst other things, requires new development to integrate well with the surrounding local area.

Living conditions

9. The appeal site is located forward of the neighbouring property to the north, No 64. However, there is a generous gap between the two properties, and whilst the proposal would increase the bulk of the existing building to the front, the gap would remain. Due to its location forward of the neighbour, the existing dwelling would influence the daylight and sunlight received by windows located to the front of No 64. However, due to the retention of the gap, I am not satisfied that the proposal would have a material effect on these existing levels. Moreover, the Council have not provided any substantive evidence on this point that would lead me to a different conclusion.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the living conditions for the occupants of neighbouring dwellings. It would therefore accord with Policy CS19 of the CS which, amongst other things, requires new development to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Conclusion

11. I have found that the proposal would not harm the living conditions for the occupants of neighbouring properties. I have also found that the proposal would bring some limited social benefits. However, these findings do not alter nor outweigh my findings in relation to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. This is a matter of overriding concern to

which I attach a significant level of weight. Accordingly, for the reasons identified above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Chandler

INSPECTOR