

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2020

by Ian Harrison BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2260/W/20/3253737

42 and 44 Gloucester Avenue, Margate, Kent CT9 3NW

- 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 Ahmed Salari and Mr Clasper against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application Ref FH/TH/20/0342, dated 4 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2020.
 - The development proposed was initially described as “new pitched roof, rear dormer and associated work.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. At Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered which reflects that used by the Council. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.
3. Since the determination of the application that is the subject of this appeal, the Thanet District Local Plan to 2031 (Adopted 2020)(The TDLP) has been adopted and has replaced the Thanet Local Plan (Adopted 2006). Both main parties have commented on the implications of the change to the development plan within their submissions and I will proceed on the basis of the policies contained within the adopted development plan.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located within the residential street of Gloucester Avenue which, in the section that includes the appeal site, consists of detached and semi-detached dwellings of varied scale and appearance that feature a mixture of pitched roofs interspersed with dwellings with flat roofs. The irregular scale and appearance of the built form within the street creates visual interest and enables the area to have a varied residential character.

6. The semi-detached dwellings at the appeal site feature a flat roof with a pair of stair enclosures that provide access to the roof. A distinctive parapet feature at the edges of the roof has a stepped design to the side, being of similar maximum height as the ridge of the roof at the neighbouring property of 40 Gloucester Avenue. The parapets are also of similar height as the eaves of the shallow pitched, hipped roof of 46 Gloucester Avenue at the opposite side. Accordingly, the height of the building relates well to the inconsistent heights of the neighbouring buildings.
7. Although there are some examples of other buildings with flat roofs within the street, none are identical to the existing pair at the appeal site and, as such, the existing building adds to the mixture of built form within the locality. Moreover, whilst the appellant has identified that the building is not of art deco style as various architectural features which might be expected of art deco buildings are absent, this does not prevent the building being of visual interest and distinctive appearance in a manner that contributes positively to the locality.
8. The proposal would involve the addition of a pitched roof to the existing building with rooflights to the front and rear and a rear dormer that would be visible from Lonsdale Avenue and surrounding properties. Although views of the side gables would be partially obstructed by the neighbouring buildings, the proposal would cause a significant increase of the height and bulk of the building with the resultant roof becoming a dominating feature of the appearance of the building. The proposal would also bring about the loss of the abovementioned parapet and the flat roof. Consequently, the development would detract from the distinctive appearance of the building and erode the contribution that it makes to the varied character of the locality.
9. The proposed roof extension would result in the building being of comparable maximum height as the dwelling at 46 Gloucester Avenue and feature full gables to both sides alike the roof of 40 Gloucester Avenue. The proposed roof extension would also be similar to the roofs that were granted separate planning permissions¹ at the nearby dwellings of 29 and 31 Gloucester Avenue and, although those permissions are of a fair age, I recognise that they are examples of the Council previously supporting the provision of pitched roofs in place of flat roofs in light of similar policies. However, the building at the appeal site is not identical to any of those other buildings and is of much greater prominence than the dwellings of 29 and 31 Gloucester Avenue due to the positioning of the site relative to the junction of Gloucester Avenue and Lonsdale Road and the arrangement of the built form around that junction. As such, those other buildings and permissions do not alter my assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the host building and, in turn, the varied character of the locality.
10. Both main parties identify that a number of the buildings within the vicinity of the site have been extended and that the variety of built form within the locality has evolved previously and may continue to do so. In this respect, the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) identifies that appropriate change should not be prevented or discouraged. However, The Framework also requires development to add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character. In this case, whilst the building would retain a unique appearance in the context of its surroundings, the development would diminish the visual interest of the building at the appeal site and reduce the contribution the existing building makes to the character of the area in a manner that would not accord with The Framework.

¹ F/TH/04/1647 and F/TH/04/1648

11. For the abovementioned reasons, the development would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to Policy QD02 of The TDLP which requires that development promotes or reinforces local character, provides high quality design which relates to the surrounding development and enhances the character of the area.
12. I have had regard to the comments made by both main parties in relation to ensuring that the extension is undertaken across the building simultaneously and the potential to impose a condition to address this matter in light of the guidance contained within The Planning Practice Guidance and the approach used in the abovementioned permissions at 29 and 31 Gloucester Avenue. However, given the conclusion that I have reached, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter further.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Ian Harrison

INSPECTOR