
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2020

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/20/3256571

57 Ruskin Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS2 5HB

- 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 Ali Ali against the decision of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02225/FULH, dated 16 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as "Paper exercise as: detail to site amended from extension detail finish rendered colour finish to match that of dwelling to brickwork finish. Due to site circumstances and in the interest of safe, long-term building."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. While the appellant has described the proposal as in the above header, the Council has referred to it as a single storey rear extension, which I consider more accurately and succinctly describes the development sought. I have assessed the appeal scheme on that basis.
3. The proposed development is complete. It appears to be broadly in accordance with the plans although the extension, as built, does not include a glazed roof lantern as shown on the plans and a side entrance has been introduced to a flank wall, which is not shown on the drawings. No plans showing amendments to the design have been submitted. For the avoidance of doubt, I have assessed the development on the basis of the plans that were considered by the Council and upon which it made its decision.

Main issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the rear extension, as proposed, on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling within an estate style residential area wherein properties are broadly similar in age and style, with some variety in type, detailed design and general appearance. The walls of the main 2-storey house are rendered and painted, as are those of the attached property and several other buildings along Ruskin Avenue.

6. In April 2015, the Council confirmed that prior approval (PA) was not required for a rear extension that would be similar in width and height to the development sought. Although about 1-metre shorter than the PA extension, the appeal scheme is still a sizeable addition. It projects outwards from the main rear wall by about 5-metres and across much of the width of the main building. Given its considerable scale, the rear extension cannot reasonably be described as a subordinate or a proportionate addition to the host property, as the appellant suggests.
7. With its red brick walls, the appearance of the rear extension contrasts markedly with the light coloured render walls of the host building and those of its attached counterpart. The visual effect of this sharp contrast in materials accentuates the prominence and emphasises the considerable scale and bulk of the rear extension. As a result, when seen from the back garden of No 57, the rear extension stands out as an overly large 'box-like' addition that dominates the rear façade of the main house. Consequently, I consider that the intrinsic character of No 57 is spoilt with the new built form in place.
8. The PA extension would be longer and larger than the development sought. However, the use of external materials to match those of the host building in that case would subdue its visual impact because the appearance of the new addition would be more likely to blend in with that of the existing building than the extension, as proposed. Consequently, the visual effect of the PA extension would be less jarring than that of the development sought.
9. Views of the rear extension from public vantage points are limited given its position at the back of the main house. Nevertheless, it is visible from a short section of Sycamore Grove, to the east of the site. From this direction, the appeal scheme draws the eye, projecting well above the boundary fence of No 57, as an uncharacteristically large, bulky and discordant element. As such, it is detrimental to the area's visual character.
10. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 1 *Design and Townscape Guide 2009* (SPD) notes that extensions must be respectful of the scale of the present building and that additions that are too large will be over dominant. That would be the case with the development before me.
11. On the main issue, I conclude that the rear extension, as proposed, would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policies KP2 and CP4 of the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy, Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Council's Development Management Document and the advice within the Council's SPD. These policies and guidance aim to ensure that development contributes to a high quality urban environment, achieves a high standard of design or quality, and enhances the character of residential areas.
12. The proposal makes efficient use of the space available within the plot and provides extra living accommodation that benefits the occupiers of No 57. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
13. For the reasons set out above, and taking into account the absence of objections from others, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR