

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 February 2021

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 March 2021

Appeal Reference: APP/A2280/D/20/3263003

Land at 74 Redwing Road, Princes Park, Chatham ME5 7TH

- 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 Ms Russell against the decision of Medway Council.
 - The application (reference MC/20/1640, dated 8 July 2020) was refused by notice dated 7 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as “demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension together with rear garden alterations”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The first main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the host building and its surroundings. The second is the effect of the proposed development on the residential amenities of neighbours (whether unacceptable harm would be caused by overbearing appearance or overshadowing).

Reasons

3. Redwing Road is part of a relatively modern residential development within the urban area of Chatham, although an area of parkland lies to the north-west of the estate. The development is characterised by two-storey houses, including short terraces, in a conventional layout. In the vicinity of the appeal site, gardens are typically not large, though some have been encroached upon by extensions and outbuildings.
4. Number 74 is a mid-terrace house, constructed of brickwork, rendered on the upper part of the wall, under a tiled roof. It has a modest garden area at the rear but this has been reduced by the construction of a conservatory (against the rear elevation of the house) and a separate outbuilding, solidly constructed of concrete blockwork with a tiled roof. The outbuilding is built at a higher level than the house and garden, due to the natural levels of the land, and it dominates the garden.

5. It is now proposed to demolish the existing conservatory and, in its place, to build a new rear extension to the house, of brickwork with a flat roof.
6. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (which was revised in February 2019) emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, which includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation.
7. An emphasis on the importance of good design is also to be found in the Development Plan, notably at Policies BNE1 and BNE2 of the 'Medway Local Plan' (which was adopted in May 2003). The former includes some general design principles, while the latter specifically addresses considerations of residential amenity.
8. The proposed extension would provide additional living space, added to the existing kitchen, and it would be significantly larger than the existing conservatory. The conservatory is constructed of relatively flimsy materials by comparison with the proposed extension, which would be constructed in a much more solid fashion, of brickwork under a flat roof. The flank walls of the proposed extension, constructed on the side boundaries of the plot, would be built up above the level of the flat roof, for ease of maintenance, but this would significantly increase the height of the side walls on the boundaries.
9. The loss of the conservatory need not be regretted and well-built extensions may well be beneficial, in principle. Indeed, rear extensions to existing houses do not always require planning permission. Moreover, it can be noted that neighbouring properties already have rear extensions. In this case, however, the proposed extension would have an undue impact on the garden, in combination with the existing rear outbuilding, and it would have an excessive height on the boundaries, due to the parapet design. Overall, the scheme would amount to an overdevelopment of the site and it would have an unacceptably overbearing impact on neighbours.
10. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed extension would make a useful addition to the existing house. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the impact of the extension on the character of the existing property and the effect that it would have on the outlook for neighbours outweigh the benefits of the project. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR