



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 February 2021

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W1525/D/20/3264994

1 Allens Close, Boreham, Chelmsford CM3 3DR

- 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 Mrs T Torn against the decision of Chelmsford City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01584/FUL, dated 6 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is part single part two storey side extension, first floor front and rear extensions, front porch and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on the corner of Allens Close and Plantation Drive which appear to have housing developments which have been constructed in the mid-late twentieth century. Allens Close is a cul-de-sac which is aligned on both side by two storey modest sized detached dwellings with a similar setback from front and side boundaries with gardens to the rear. Visual gaps are located between buildings which together with vegetated setbacks and the lack of boundary walls along the road edge gives an open, leafy and spacious feel in and around the dwellings. Along with the similar design, massing and materials of the dwellings, these elements contribute positively to the local character and distinctiveness of the locality. The importance of the spaces in and around dwellings also continues to Plantation Drive, which although at the point of the appeal site contains bungalows, these dwellings too inhabit the positive characteristics which setbacks, vegetation and spaces in and around the dwellings contribute to the positive characteristics of the locality.
4. Whilst comments in the applicant's Statement of Case (SoC) puts forward arguments that the appeal site is different to the surrounding street scene and 'is in distinct isolation from other houses in Allens Close,' I do not share these views. It is quite apparent the relationship of the appeal site with Allens Close with regards to the positive attributes of its character which also show evidence of conformity with design, materials, scale and setbacks as per the remainder of Allens Close. Whilst I agree with the applicant that such a street does not merit an overly preservationist response, any proposed scheme should however be in keeping with the positive characteristics and location which

contributes to local character and distinctiveness as per Chelmsford Local Plan 2020 (LP) Policy DM23.

5. The proposed scheme would increase the size of the existing dwelling in a way which would not reflect the local character and appearance of the locality. The extension would cover almost the entire width of the property with the proposed garage running up to the side boundary with Allens Close with one of the corners of the proposed garage overhanging the footpath according to the Block Plan. The elongation of the roof to the side boundary at first floor level together with the additional rear wing add a large amount of visual bulk and massing which would appear oversized and discordant to the modest sized dwellings within this context. The positive elements such as the open and spacious qualities of spaces in and around the dwellings would be removed, resulting in a cramped and overdeveloped site.
6. Whilst I appreciate the applicant's comments that there have been no objections from neighbouring residents to the proposed development, the lack of objections does not mean that the proposal is in conformity with the policies of the development plan. I am also not persuaded by comments that the proposed scheme would be hidden by vegetation, as a number of elements of the proposed scheme, particularly the garage and the increased bulk and massing are very prevalent within the street scene which is very prominent to this corner plot. The presence of any vegetation or screening would not resolve these matters.
7. Consequently, the scheme would not reinforce the qualities of local character and distinctiveness and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building and the locality. This would be contrary to LP Policy DM23 which amongst a number of design principles seeks that development be compatible with the existing character and appearance of the area, in terms of siting, scale, form, massing, materials and detailing.

Conclusion

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

J Somers

INSPECTOR