
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 July 2021

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/21/3270892

2 Hillyfields, Loughton, IG10 2JS

- 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 Shanaz Faqir against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref, PL/EPF/2767/20 dated 25 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a part two-storey, part single-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area around Hillyfields and Pyrles Lane.

Reasons

3. No 2 Hillyfields is a semi-detached house situated on a corner plot at the junction of Hillyfields with Pyrles Lane. Along with the adjoining No 47 Pyrles Lane, it is set at a 45 degree angle to the houses fronting Hillyfields and Pyrles Lane. This configuration also occurs on the opposite corner plot to the north. Because of its corner location, the plot has a triangular shape which narrows from the wide Hillyfields frontage to the apex at the rear of the property
4. The proposed development would involve the construction of a side extension with a two-storey element to the front and a single-storey element to the rear. There would also be a small single-storey element projecting to the front with a mono-pitch roof. The projecting front element would follow the building line formed by the front bay window of the house. The two-storey element would continue the main front elevation of the house for approximately 3.5 metres to the side. At a point around 1.5 metres from the boundary with No 4 Hillyfields, the side elevation of this element returns to meet the boundary. From this point the single-storey element follows the boundary between the two houses.
5. The Council contends that the proposal, by virtue of its scale, mass and siting, would lead to overdevelopment of the site, a terracing effect and a cramped form of development, and that it would be at odds with the established built form of the surrounding area, and harmful to the street-scene.

6. Policy CP2 of the Council's Local Plan (LP) indicates that new development should safeguard and enhance the setting, character and townscape of the urban environment. Policy DBE10 of the LP indicates that a residential extension will be required to complement and, where appropriate, enhance the appearance of the street-scene, paying attention to, amongst other things, the scale, form and elevations of the existing building, and separation from any neighbouring buildings. Policy DM9 of the Council's Local Plan Submission Version (LPSV) requires all new developments to contribute to the distinctive character of the local area, and relate positively to their context. In the light of the advanced stage of production of the LPSV, and its consistency with the National Planning Policy framework on matters of high quality design, I can afford Policy DM9 significant weight.
7. The appeal property is situated in a prominent position at the busy road junction between Hillyfields and Pyrles Lane. It is clearly visible from the western side of the junction and when approaching the junction from Pyrles Lane. The proposed front elevation after alterations would be sympathetic to the context of the existing house. However, I have concerns regarding the impact of the proposed extension on the setting of the appeal property within the street scene.
8. Although the pair of houses formed by the appeal property and the adjoining No 47 Pyrles Lane are set at 45 degrees to the rows of houses on each side, the corners of the two houses would appear to reflect the building lines of those rows of houses. I consider this to be an important feature in the character and appearance of the area along these parts of Hillyfields and Pyrles Lane, particularly given that the same configuration can be seen on the opposite corner plot. I note that No 47 has a single-storey side extension that projects beyond the building line evident along Pyrles Lane, but it has no first-floor extension to break that building line. By way of contrast, the proposal at No 2 would have a first-floor element that would project well beyond the building line evident along Hillyfields. In view of its height, scale and prominent position, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the otherwise relatively uniform appearance along the road.
9. There is currently a gap between the appeal property and the adjacent No 4 Hillyfields, which is accentuated by the divergent angle between the two properties at the front of the houses. However, the proposed side extension, which would be two-storey in nature, would fill a significant proportion of that gap. Whilst the gap at the front portion of the side extension would be wider, owing to the angle between the two houses, the first-floor element would effectively fill the plot to the side boundary. In addition, the apparent gap between the two houses would be reduced by virtue of the forward projection of the extension, which would emphasise its scale within the street scene.
10. The appellant contends that the proposed extension would be very similar in design to that of a recent extension at No 49 Pyrles Lane, which largely fills the gap between that property and the adjacent No 47. However, I note that, in this case, No 49 is the northernmost house in the row of houses along the west side of Pyrles Lane, and that it forms part of the established building line of that row of properties. The two-storey element of extension at No 49 is set back a small amount from the front elevation and does not break the building line. It is not prominent and does not appear discordant in the context of the properties along Pyrles Lane.

11. The appellant also makes reference to other side extensions that have been constructed along Pyrles Lane. These, however, do not reflect the same context as that of the appeal site and its surroundings, and they do not appear to involve development that projects forward of the established building line.
12. In conclusion, I find that the proposed extension, by virtue of its scale, form and siting, would not complement or enhance the appearance of the street-scene, nor would it enhance the setting, character and townscape of the surrounding urban environment. In view of its prominent corner plot situation, it would appear in the street scene as a dominating feature that would not satisfactorily reflect the context of its location. It would break the established building line along Hillyfields, and would not complement the currently similar arrangement of houses on the opposite corner plot. As a result, it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area around Hillyfields and Pyrles Lane. On this basis, it would conflict with Policies CP2 and DBE10 of the LP, and with Policy DM9 of the LPSV. I therefore dismiss this appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR