

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2021

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 November 2021

Appeal Reference: APP/L2250/D/21/3282776

Land at 36 Walton Gardens, Folkestone CT19 5PR

- 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 D Clarke against the decision of Folkestone & Hythe District Council.
 - The application (reference 21/1568/FH, dated 23 July 2021) was refused by notice dated 27 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a “proposed first floor side extension over existing ground floor”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in a suburban part of Folkestone, to the north of the town centre. The area is laid out with a meandering road pattern and the frontages are mainly developed with pairs of semi-detached houses. The houses are generally closely spaced but are usually separated from each other by their drives and single-storey garages, creating a sense of openness in the townscape.
4. Walton Gardens ends in a wide loop around an open space that appears to be well used. This space is located on higher ground relative to the built-up frontages and it affords long views over the town, contributing to a sense of spaciousness.
5. Number 36 Walton Gardens is located near to the bend in the road as it turns the north-western corner of the open space at the centre of the layout. Thus, the adjoining detached house at number 35 has a tapering plot shape, with a somewhat cramped frontage but a larger back garden.

6. Number 36, by contrast, has a roughly rectangular plot, with a long back garden like its other neighbours. It is a semi-detached house, with a hipped pitched roof, including a forward projecting two-storey element, above rendered walls on the front elevation. There is a "lean-to" garage at the side adjacent to number 35, with other accommodation on the ground floor behind the garage.
7. It is now proposed to construct an extension at first floor level, above the existing single-storey garage and living accommodation.
8. Policies in the 'Places and Policies Local Plan' (which was adopted in September 2020') are particularly relevant to this appeal. Policy HB1 is a general policy that seeks to achieve "Quality Places Through Design" and which draws attention to a range of design considerations, while Policy HB8 provides specific criteria in respect of "Alterations and Extensions to Buildings". It includes a specific provision that is intended to "avoid creating a terracing effect which could result by extending up to the boundary", providing that "a minimum distance of one metre should be maintained from the boundary to any part of the extension above single storey level".
9. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (which was revised in July 2021) includes the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), without seeking to imposed detailed criteria. 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.
10. The proposed first-floor side extension would add a new en-suite shower room to the side of the bedroom that is contained in the forward projecting section of the house. The main part of the proposed new extension would be set further back, providing a new bathroom and a new double bedroom (also with an en-suite shower room). The additional space would undoubtedly be a useful addition to the house but the project would occupy the whole width of the site at first floor level, up to the side boundary.
11. The different elements of the new extension would create a complex floor plan at first floor level, resulting in a somewhat awkward roofscape and front elevation. More significantly, the scheme would close the gap between numbers 36 and 35, creating a visually more continuous built-up frontage and undermining the spacious character of the surroundings. Thus, the proposals would cause some harm to the appearance of the host building and would have a clearly detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the surroundings, in direct conflict with the criteria that are set out in Policy HB8 of the 'Places and Policies Local Plan'.
12. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed development would make a useful addition to the existing house. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the harm that would be done to the appearance of the existing house and to the character and appearance of the surroundings 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