

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/21/3281174

Land at 279 Dover Road, Folkestone CT19 6NT

- 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 S Jermy against the decision of Folkestone & Hythe District Council.
 - The application (reference 21/0540/FH, dated 12 March 2021) was refused by notice dated 28 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as: "*demolition of existing garage and erection of a two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension*".
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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. Dover Road is a main road, the A260, leading from the centre of Folkestone and Folkestone Harbour towards Dover, which lies further along the coast, to the north-east. It is a wide road, with a painted central reservation, set with substantial residential properties on either side. The houses are generally detached or semi-detached houses, typically well spaced out along the road frontages, with intervening accesses to garages.
4. Number 279 is located within the western frontage at the northern end of this section of Dover Road, where the A260 turns to run parallel to Hill Road. The appeal property is one of a number of substantial detached houses on this part of the frontage, although the separation between buildings has not always been preserved. Number 279 is constructed with brickwork and rendered walls under a steeply pitched, hipped (almost pyramidal) roof and it has various architectural embellishments, particularly evident on a forward projecting gabled element. A single-storey, flat-roofed garage is attached to the side of

- the house. The house is set back from the highway, with a front garden that is mainly laid to grass and a long back garden.
5. It is now proposed that the existing garage should be demolished and the house remodelled by the erection of a two storey side extension, combined with a single storey rear extension.
 6. 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".
 7. 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.
 8. The proposed remodelling would create a new garage within the front section of the new extensions, with a small utility room behind it and a large ground floor dining and kitchen area, including a single-storey rear extension, opening onto the back garden. At first floor level, a new bedroom and en-suite shower room would be constructed, above the garage and utility room.
 9. The design details would be in keeping with the existing house but the first floor extension would close up the space between the existing building and its side boundary, adjacent to number 277 Dover Road, leaving only a small awkward gap adjacent to the front elevation, as a result of the irregular shape of the site, which tapers slightly towards the rear alongside the existing house and garage.
 10. That part of the neighbouring house at number 277 Dover Road which adjoins the side boundary of the appeal site is also single-storey, although it appears to provide living accommodation rather than a garage. Nevertheless, the proposed two-storey side extension at number 279 would contribute to closing the gap between the properties at first floor level and would erode the spacious character of the surroundings. Moreover, if repeated too often (for the sake of consistency in decision-making) such extensions would alter the streetscene very significantly, contrary to the specific intention of Policy HB8 of the 'Places and Policies Local Plan'.
 11. 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 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