
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 November 2021

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1ST December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/21/3282146
63 Southborough Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 9XG

- 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 and Mrs Liebenberg against the decision of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 21/00938/FULH, dated 5 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is alterations to existing roof/dormers and aesthetic elements.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but as the parties have not provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed I have used the one given on the original application.
3. Since the application was determined a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published. However, as the policies of most relevance to this proposal have not changed fundamentally it has not been necessary to seek further comments from the Council, and the appellants appeal statement has taken the revised document into account.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached dwelling with rooms in the roof served by front and rear dormer windows. It is within a mixed street scene of properties that vary in design and form, including single- and two-storey dwellings, and other chalet-style buildings.
6. Notwithstanding this mix, the proposed two-storey and first-floor additions would appear somewhat incongruous in the street scene. I appreciate the aim to create contemporary and innovative extensions, but the proposed front wing

would appear disproportionate and obtrusive, with its design and proximity to the front dormer window creating an awkward mismatch of styles. Although the increased footprint of the building would be modest, the extra first-floor bulk would be significant given the size and scale of the host dwelling. I do not share the appellants view that the front and rear extensions would appear subservient, particularly with the raised eaves height. This would not be offset by the ridge height of the proposed extensions being set below the main ridge.

7. The proposal would therefore conflict with the aims of Core Strategy¹ (CS) Policy KP2, which seeks development that improves the urban environment through quality design, and this is reinforced in CS Policy CP4. Amongst other criteria aimed at reinforcing local distinctiveness, DMD² Policy DM1 requires development to respect the character of the site, its local context and surroundings in terms including architectural approach, height, size, scale, form, massing, proportions and detailed design features. As proposed, the scale would not be respectful and subservient to that of the original building and surrounding area, nor make a positive contribution to their character, as required by DMD Policy DM3.
8. Whilst the rear extension would be less visible in the street scene, it would nevertheless add to the bulk of the resultant building, and would be highly visible in the rear garden environment. Viewed together, the front and rear additions would overwhelm the dwelling, and the adverse visual impact would be apparent in views on approach into Southborough Drive, above the gardens of dwellings to the west. Whilst I acknowledge that the building is not of heritage value or within a conservation area this does not override the importance of achieving quality design in the built environment.
9. There is no objection in principle to changes to the fenestration, external finishes and alterations to the roof of a single-storey side projection, but this does not alter my assessment of the front and rear extensions.
10. I note the appellants' view that the existing property is grossly underdeveloped and that the proposal would make more efficient use of land. However, this must be balanced against the visual impact of securing the additional accommodation, and in the form proposed the utilisation of space would be at the expense of the local built environment.
11. The appellants have provided photographs of buildings elsewhere in the Borough, and also details of other planning permissions granted. However, on the basis of the information supplied I am unable to gauge direct comparisons with the appeal proposal, and therefore these offer limited support.
12. I therefore conclude that, as a result of the size, scale, form and design, the proposed two-storey and first-floor extensions would detract from the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. This would conflict with the design aims of the Framework, to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings that are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, and with CS Policies KP2 and CP4, DMD Policies DM1 and DM3, and the guidance set out in the Design and Townscape Guide, which notes that additions that are too large will be over dominant, and highlights the importance of subservience.

¹ Southend on Sea Core Strategy Development Plan Document One 2007

² Southend on Sea Development Management Document July 2015

Other Matters

13. The comments of neighbouring residents are noted in respect of light loss, overshadowing, privacy and outlook. However, I share the Council's assessment that the distances from other properties would ensure that the proposal would not result in any significant material harm to the amenities of the site and neighbouring occupiers. However, that does not alter my conclusion on the main issue.
14. Reference to land ownership and boundary issues is a civil matter and is not for consideration as part of this appeal.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR