

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2022

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd February 2022

Appeal Reference: APP/M1595/D/21/3280965

Land at 106 Digby Road, Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope SS17 9BU

- 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 D Hallissey against the decision of Thurrock Council.
 - The application (reference 21/00554/HHA, dated 5 April 2021) was refused by notice dated 7 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as follows: "Single Storey rear extension with roof lights and a single storey side extension to create a porch; Hip to gable loft conversion with front and rear dormer".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The first 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. The second is the effect of the proposed development on the residential amenities of neighbours (whether unacceptable harm would be caused by overbearing appearance or overshadowing). Thirdly, it is necessary to consider the implications of the scheme for on-street parking in the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in Corringham, to the north-east of Stanford-le-Hope. The location is residential in character, with a variety of house types including both bungalows and two-storey houses. Nevertheless, it is closely built up, with a preponderance of semi-detached properties in this part of Digby Road.
4. There are a considerable number of dormers in the vicinity of the appeal site, including examples on both the front and rear roof slopes of traditionally designed pitched roofs. Some properties have been altered by the construction of gable additions to pitched roofs, including where this has produced an asymmetrical semi-detached pair.
5. The appeal site lies next to the junction with Finches Close which serves the rear of various sites but which also serves a block of flats that has been erected behind frontage properties in Digby Road. Number 106 is a semi-detached

- bungalow, constructed with rendered walls under a tiled roof and forming a pair with number 104, with which it shares a main hipped roof.
6. It is now proposed to construct various extensions to the existing bungalow, including a single-storey rear extension (with a flat roof) and dormer extensions to both the front and rear roof slopes of the existing roof, combined with a conversion of the hipped roof to create a gable.
 7. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (which was revised in July 2021) emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), 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. Under the broad heading "Promoting sustainable transport", Section 9 of the revised 'National Planning Policy Framework' (2021) deals with a number of transport related issues and emphasises the importance of maintaining highway safety and convenience.
 9. Policies CSTP22 and PMD1 of the 'Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development' (which was adopted in January 2015) lay a specific emphasis on the need for good design, while Policy PMD2 draws attention to the need to protect existing residential amenities. Guidance in relation to design considerations is to be found in the 'Thurrock Design Guide Residential Alterations and Extensions SPD' (dated July 2017), though it does not have the same force as Policies in the Development Plan.
 10. Policy PMD8 of the Council's Policy Document sets out parking standards that apply to development proposals. The 'Thurrock Parking Standards and Good Practice Guide March 2012' is also relevant.
 11. In this case, the proposed alterations would have a combined effect on the building that would create an awkward and ungainly finished appearance. The conversion of the hipped roof to form a gable would create a strongly asymmetrical roof structure and, more significantly, the "box" dormer constructions at the front and the rear of the main pitched roof would be out of keeping with the traditional style of the building and would have an intrusive impact on the streetscene, being very obvious in views from both Digby Road and Finches Close.
 12. Overall, the resulting architectural assemblage would not be cohesive, creating an unattractive assemblage and failing to achieve the aim of good design that is an important aspect of both national and local planning policies. The project as submitted would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings and, in consequence, I have formed the opinion that this appeal must fail.
 13. The proposed ground floor extension at the rear of the existing dwelling would be much less obvious in the streetscene than the proposed changes at roof level. It would project beyond the existing main rear wall of the building and would be built up to the boundary with the neighbouring property but it would not be disproportionate in its context, even though there would be some overshadowing, late in the day (in summer). It would restrict the outlook from

the rear of number 104 to some extent but I am not persuaded that the resultant harm to residential amenity would be so significant as to conflict with adopted planning policies or to justify a refusal of planning permission.

14. The proposed development would increase the number of bedrooms in the dwelling and, in principle, would lead to an increased need for on-site parking. The Council's adopted policies and guidance indicate how this could be assessed but it is clear that there is space within the site for adequate provision to be made. This could be controlled by the imposition of a suitable condition or conditions, therefore. Again, therefore, the lack of clarity on parking provision would not have justified a refusal of planning permission if the project had otherwise been acceptable.
15. 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. Moreover, I am aware that some types of domestic extensions can be acceptable as "permitted development" in certain circumstances. In this case, however, the relevance of a notional alternative scheme for "permitted development" has not clearly been demonstrated. The criteria for "permitted development" can be complex and, in this case, I am only able to give limited weight to arguments suggesting that a "fallback" scheme could be devised to support the current application. In any case, I am required to consider each development proposal on its own merits and I have determined that this scheme ought not to be allowed, for the reasons stated.
16. I have not been persuaded that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbours or that on-site parking provision would inevitably be inadequate. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the scheme as a whole is unsatisfactory. The combination of awkward and disparate elements would have a clearly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings and the intrusive and ungainly appearance of the finished development outweighs the benefits of the project, notwithstanding the nature of other developments that have been permitted in the area.
17. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) that are intended to promote good design and that this appeal 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