

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: 1 MARCH 2022

Appeal Reference: APP/M1595/D/21/3287037

Land at 2 Northlands Close, Stanford-le-Hope SS17 8DL

- 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 Kirby against the decision of Thurrock Council.
 - The application (reference 21/01496/HHA, dated 27 August 2021) was refused by notice dated 28 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a "single storey side extension with hipped roof and adjustments to flank window at first floor level".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a "single storey side extension with hipped roof and adjustments to flank window at first floor level", at 2 Northlands Close, Stanford-le-Hope SS17 8DL, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference 21/01496/HHA, dated 27 August 2021), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

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 an extensive suburban area of Stanford-le-Hope, with Southend Road running through the area, although the Stanford-le-Hope Bypass (the A13) runs to the north-west of the settlement. The area is primarily residential but there is a considerable variety of house types and sizes, albeit they are generally traditional and conventional in style, in spite of their individual differences.
4. The appeal site is situated at the corner of Northlands Close and Branksome Avenue and while the former connects into a pattern of quieter residential roads, the latter is a long straight road that also serves to distribute traffic through the area.
5. Number 2 Northlands Close is a two-storey house, constructed of brickwork under a tiled roof and forming one of a semi-detached pair with its neighbour

at number 4. The frontage is closely built up, however, with linking garages between the houses. The main elevations face Northlands Close with a gable flank wall at number 2 facing Branksome Avenue, across its own side garden, the house on this corner plot being set back also from the side boundary. Thus, the buildings along the northern frontage of Branksome Avenue generally follow a building line established by the front elevations of houses facing the road (though with some exceptions).

6. It is now proposed to add a single storey side extension to this gabled flank elevation, extending the house over its side garden, towards Branksome Avenue. An alteration would also be needed to an existing window in this elevation, to accommodate the change.
7. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' 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 providing good standards of accommodation.
8. Policies CSTP22, PMD1 and PMD2 of the 'Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development' (which was adopted in January 2015) also lay specific emphasis on the need for good design. 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.
9. There are some visual interruptions in the otherwise mainly continuous frontage along Branksome Avenue that, if anything, create interest in the streetscene and help to impart a human scale to the long vista down the road. Especially at road junctions, such interruptions can punctuate the streetscene and add to a sense of place. In principle, therefore, it may well be acceptable or even desirable to breach the "building line" of the main frontage buildings, to improve the streetscene.
10. In this case, the proposed extension would be only single storey but it would mark the junction at Northlands Close and would introduce a feature into the street frontage, even if only a minor one. In principle, it would be beneficial to the townscape, in my view.
11. In terms of its specific form, it must be acknowledged that the roof design would differ from the existing main roof of the house. The existing roof of the two-storey building has a gabled form whereas the new lower level roof would be hipped. It would also have a shallower pitch. Even though matching materials would be employed, the differences would be noticed.
12. Nevertheless, the extension would be generally in keeping with its surroundings. The materials to be used would match those of the existing house and would harmonise with surrounding buildings. The new construction would be single storey, reducing its visual impact, and the pitched roof, though different in shape from that of the host building, would not introduce a jarring or inappropriate form in the wider context.
13. 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, occupying a little used part of the existing garden. I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with the Development Plan, in principle. In short, I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted, subject to conditions and, 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.

14. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of the conditions suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal). I have concluded that conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - drawing number K1192-PL-001A (Site Location Plan);
 - drawing number K1192-PL-002A (Site Block Plan Existing);
 - drawing number K1192-PL-003A (Site Block Plan Proposed);
 - drawing number K1192-PL-004A (Building Plans Existing);
 - drawing number K1192-PL-005A (Building Plans Proposed);
 - drawing number K1192-PL-006A (Building Elevations Existing);
 - drawing number K1192-PL-007A (Building Elevations Proposed).
3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.