



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2022

by Robin Buchanan BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/D/21/3279648

6 Quarry View, Singleton, Ashford, Kent TN23 5WD

- 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 Lorne Brown against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00370/AS, dated 17 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is a second floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a modern two-storey detached house in a small cul-de-sac. It is part of a large, mainly residential development that forms a suburb on the edge of Ashford. Quarry View and other cul-de-sacs nearby contain, broadly, mostly similar types of houses in size, height and scale and massing. This strong homogeneity is plain to see and comprehend and, as such, is locally distinctive.
4. The proposal would add a second floor and a new roof to the appeal property. In detailed external design it would essentially be a copy of the existing first floor and roof. In this sense, and albeit extruding the building an additional floor higher, the proposal would not be visually incongruous in relation to the appeal property taken on its own or unduly detract from its appearance.
5. However, there would nevertheless be a substantial increase in its overall size in terms of height and scale and massing. While the appeal property is not at the highest part of Quarry View, and some houses are at different levels, the extra storey and significantly increased roof eaves and ridge heights would be at significant variance with most of these houses. Even if the new ridge appeared similar in height to the house behind the appeal property, which is higher and set back from the road, the large protuberance of additional built form next to and facing the road would nonetheless be unduly visually prominent and conspicuous.
6. The resulting three-storey house would, therefore, be in stark isolation as one of a kind in the immediate area, manifestly out of keeping with the surrounding

houses in these regards. It would have appreciable presence and appear overly dominant, without any nearby provenance or precedent. This would be evident in public views from Quarry View and parts of Strouts Road and Green Fields Lane. Consequently, the extended house would appear as an anomaly and not be readily assimilated into these streetscenes.

7. There are some taller blocks of flats or town houses, including three-storeys, in Singleton Hill and Imperial Way. However, those buildings are either on much lower ground and in distinctly different character areas or are sited as 'landmark' buildings along or close to the main spine or distributor roads. These are separated by distance or intervening topography, built form or landscaping, such that they do not have any meaningful visual or spatial relationship with the appeal property. This other development does not, therefore, provide any immediate context that justifies the proposal at the appeal property with its more discrete location in Quarry View.
8. I have been referred to Class AA permitted development rights (PDR) for enlargement of a dwellinghouse by construction of up to two additional storeys¹. The appeal property has been previously extended at first floor level. However, even if the additional storey sought in this appeal complied with the limitations of Class AA, as set out in paragraph AA.1, it would have to comply with the conditions set out in paragraph AA.2. These include that prior approval for such development is granted before these PDR can be exercised having regard to, in paragraph AA.2(3)(a)(ii), the external appearance of the dwellinghouse in relation to its impact on neighbouring premises and the locality² — ie similar considerations as in this appeal. I have not been referred to any prior approval. These PDR are not yet therefore established and there is no fall-back in this respect.
9. I have also been referred to PDR for a dormer loft conversion, which may be possible under Class B. However, such development would result in a materially different external appearance to the appeal property than that sought in this appeal. There is, anyway, no scheme before me and I note that this form of extension has been discounted by the appellant for other reasons.
10. Taking all of the above into account, and notwithstanding my finding in relation to the effect of the proposal on the appeal property, I find that it would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would not comply with Policies SP6 and HOU8 of the Ashford Local Plan, adopted February 2019. These policies include that development should carefully consider, and respond positively to, distinctiveness and sense of place. It should also be suitable in size and scale and not result in significant harm to the overall character and appearance of the area, considering surrounding built form and the streetscene. In these respects, it would conflict with the Council's guidance on extensions³, in particular sections 3, 4 and 5.
11. It would also conflict with objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) to achieve well-designed places (section 12). It would not add to the overall quality of the area or be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment, or maintain a strong sense of place using

¹ Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA of the Town Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

² *Cab Housing Ltd & OTHERS v SSLUHC* [2022] EWHC 208

³ 'Domestic Extensions in Urban and Rural Areas' Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 10, June 2004

building types to create attractive and distinctive places to live (paragraphs 130 a), c) and d)).

Other Matters

12. I appreciate that the appellant seeks to increase living accommodation at the appeal property, including by making use of an already developed site and that it would offer some construction efficiencies. These benefits would be limited and so would not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified above. I acknowledge that a number of local residents support the proposal and note that a resident objected, as did Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council. The absence of greater public objection does not mean the absence of planning harm in the wider public interest. I have, in any event, considered the proposal and this appeal on its individual planning merits.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Robin Buchanan

INSPECTOR