



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B0230/D/22/3291810

19 Fieldgate Road, Luton LU4 9TA

- 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 Mrs Sana Gulfraz Ali against the decision of Luton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01450/FULHH, dated 17 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of single storey side/rear extension with front, side and rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The submitted Site Location Plan shows the property adjacent to 19 Fieldgate Road edged red. I have assumed this is an error given the details of the proposal illustrated on the remaining drawings, which all relate to No 19. I have proceeded on that basis.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

4. The proposal is to enlarge the appeal property, which is a semi-detached single storey dwelling within a predominantly residential area. It stands in the row of bungalows that front the same side of Fieldgate Road, which are broadly similar in style, age and appearance with some variety in scale and height. Even so, most of these dwellings are still limited in size and keep a relatively low-profile to the road. Consequently, existing properties, including No 19 and those on either side of the site, generally have a modest presence in the street scene.
5. Single storey extensions are proposed to the side and rear of the existing dwelling with a new first floor introduced above the enlarged ground floor served by new dormers and roof lights. The external materials would match those of the existing building. The front building line of the pair to which No 19 belongs would remain the same. The top of the proposed dormers and the apex of the front roof would also be set below the main ridgeline.

6. However, the new ground floor rear addition would extend across almost the full width of the plot and so it would be wider than the existing dwelling. It would connect with the proposed ground floor side extension that would exceed the length of the host building. Each of the new dormers would be a sizeable addition and placed onto the extended front, side and rear roof slopes of the dwelling. Taken together, these changes would lengthen and widen the built form of No 19, significantly enlarge its footprint, and noticeably add to its scale and mass particularly at roof level. In doing so, the proposal would unduly compromise the modest scale and proportions of the existing dwelling and spoil its intrinsic character.
7. The proposed extended building would be noticeably more substantial in built form than the existing dwelling and the bungalows on either side of the site. As a result, the proposal would cause No 19 to gain prominence in the local street scene. When seen from Fieldgate Road, in front of and to each side of the site, the completed dwelling would draw the eye because it would stand uncomfortably within the row of modest sized bungalows on either side. By unduly disrupting the pattern of existing development along this section of Fieldgate Road, the proposal would be obtrusive in the streetscape and detrimental to the area's visual character.
8. In reaching this conclusion, I have carefully considered the recent decisions of the Council to approve various extensions and alterations to other properties along Fieldgate Road to which the appellant as referred and provided background details. To reiterate, it is the specific relationship of the proposal with the host building and the adjacent dwellings and the consequences for the streetscape and the local area that are objectionable in this case. From the information provided, the particular circumstances of the appeal scheme do not appear to be replicated elsewhere. In any event, each development should be assessed on its own merits, as I have done.
9. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policies LLP1, LLP19 and LLP25 of the Local Luton Local Plan 2011-2031. These policies seek to ensure that development responds and enhances local character; achieves a high standard of design; and requires that extensions are proportionate to the principal dwelling, the streetscape and the character of the area. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that developments should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.
10. An interested party raises additional concerns in relation to privacy, visual intrusion and the separation distance between the new development and a site boundary. These are important matters and I have taken into account all of the evidence before me. However, given my findings on the main issue, these are not matters that have been critical to my decision.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR