

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 June 2022

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 July 2022

Appeal Reference: APP/V1505/D/22/3296788

11 Gloucester Place, Billericay CM12 0YL

- 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 Ms G Seabrook against the decision of Basildon Council.
 - The application (reference 21/01669/FULL, dated 11 November 2021) was refused by notice dated 25 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a "Double Storey Side Extension".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

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 surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a suburban area of Billericay, where an extensive residential area is characterised by an irregular, flowing street pattern, serving a range of house types in generally conventional forms. Gloucester Place is a small cul-de-sac, set mainly with semi-detached pairs of houses that are predominantly finished in brickwork or render with gabled roofs. The houses are ranged along the street frontages, each with their own modest front and rear gardens, but the original layout has been modified, in some cases, by alterations and additions to the original houses.
4. Number 11 Gloucester Place is located at the end of the cul-de-sac, where the houses cluster in a tight group around the turning head, and the existing house forms one of a semi-detached pair with number 12. As a result of the layout, the plot at number 11 is slightly wedge-shaped, responding to the pattern of development with a relatively narrow frontage and a wider area at the back of the house.
5. It is now proposed to add a two-storey side extension at number 11, to provide a kitchen extension, garage and other accommodation on the ground floor, with bedroom and ancillary accommodation above.

6. 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. New development ought to be sympathetic to local character and history, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities. Nevertheless, the aim of achieving good design standards generally includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation in new dwellings.
7. Development Plan Policies share the principles that are set out in the 'National Planning Policy Framework', in particular Policy BAS BE12 of the 'Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies' (dated 2007), which sets out broad development control criteria. These include a requirement for new development to respect the character of the surrounding area, including the streetscene.
8. The proposed extension at number 11 Gloucester Place would add to the existing semi-detached pair, with a new two-storey extension alongside the existing gabled elevation. The new extension would be partly finished with a new, smaller, gabled side wall, but this would be combined with a hipped roof attached to the front of the new gabled roof.
9. The appearance of the new extension would not be in harmony with the existing building, or with its neighbours. The combination of a new partially hipped roof with the original gabled roof would be awkward and ungainly and the finished building would have an unattractive appearance. It is true that the extension would be set back from the frontage but it would, nevertheless, have a harmful impact on the streetscene, eroding the consistency of character that more typical of the area. At the same time, its proximity to its side boundary would emphasise the cramped and unsatisfactory appearance of the project as a whole.
10. Reference has been made in the appeal to examples of other buildings that have been extended in the locality but I am conscious that each case must be considered on its own merits especially, perhaps, in matters of design. In any case, I have noted other examples that do, indeed, incorporate designs that more satisfactorily integrate with their host buildings than would be the case for the proposals that are the subject of this appeal.
11. Moreover, the proposed extension would not produce a very useful layout on the ground floor. Although the kitchen extension would be beneficial, the proposed very short garage would not have a clear function as such and the overall benefits of the scheme would appear to be limited.
12. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and an extension to the building need not be ruled out in principle. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the harm that would be done to the streetscene, and to the character and appearance of the surroundings more generally, clearly outweigh the benefits of the project. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it 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