



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2022

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/22/3300944

53 South Hill Road, Gravesend DA12 1JX

- 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 Vicky Lewis against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20211561, dated 17 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 March 2022.
 - The proposed development is for two storey side and first floor rear extensions together with internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on a) the character of the dwelling and the surrounding area, including the siting within the Windmill Hill Conservation Area (CA); and b) the living conditions of the occupants of 52 South Hill Road in respect of light and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site relates to a two-storey, end terrace dwelling sited on the South Hill Road with off-street parking to the side. The local neighbourhood is predominantly residential in nature.
 4. Special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
 5. The special architectural and historic interest of the CA derives from the topography, which has shaped the street pattern, with narrow lanes meandering up the steep slopes of the hill, and buildings arranged to take full effect of attractive views across the surrounding landscape. The two typical forms of buildings are paired villas and terraces, many of which are set back from the pavement line behind front gardens.
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6. It would be evident from South Hill Road that the width of front elevation of the proposed extension would exceed the main dwelling. Being wider than the existing house, the addition would lack subservience. The imposing appearance of the extension would be in contrast to the host building, and compete with its overall scale. It would represent a bulky addition to the detriment of the character of the dwelling and the surrounding CA.
7. I note that the ridge height of the two-storey side element would be slightly lower than that of the host property. Nonetheless, the overall scale of the proposed element at first floor and roof level would obstruct the view along the rear of the terraces fronting South Hill Road and Constitution Hill when seen from the highway in the direction of Constitution Crescent. Such tightly-framed vistas are listed as important features in the Windmill Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal, and I consider that the loss of this aspect would be deleterious to the spatial quality of the CA.
8. I recognise that the scheme would not reduce the garden depth and would provide more workable layout and space for the appellant. However, these issues do not overcome the harm I have identified above.
9. I conclude that the scheme would be injurious to the character of the dwelling and the surrounding area, including the siting within the CA. It would contravene Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (CS), Policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994, and the Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide October 2021, which seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Living conditions

10. The proposed extension will be built over the existing outrigger at ground floor and project away from its side wall to the west. I note that the development would be pitch away from the common boundary with 52 South Hill Road, such that the amount of built form at roof level over the current single storey element would be set in by approximately 1 metre from the boundary.
11. I saw at my site visit that the existing single storey outrigger has a monopitch roof of relatively substantial height on the boundary with no.52. Bearing in mind the set back at roof level, the appeal proposal would not appreciably impact upon the outlook of the occupants of the adjoining house above and over that which is already experienced. Due to the orientation between the dwellings, any loss of light to the rear of no.52 would be minimal and only occur later in the day.
12. I conclude on this matter that the development would not cause detriment to the living conditions of the occupants of 52 South Hill Road in respect of light and outlook. It would accord with Policy CS19 of the CS, which states that new development will be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties. It would also be consistent with the Framework which seeks to ensure safe and healthy living conditions.

Conclusion

13. Based on the foregoing and all issues raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR