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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 August 2022

**by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 22nd September 2022**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Z3635/D/22/3301977**

**3 Reedsfield Road, Ashford, TW15 2HE**

- 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 Shane Kotecha against the decision of Spelthorne Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 22/00310/HOU, dated 1 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 April 2022.
  - The development proposed is erection of a single storey rear extension, two storey side extension and conversion of existing garage into a habitable room.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of a single storey rear extension, two storey side extension and conversion of existing garage into a habitable room at 3 Reedsfield Road, Ashford, TW15 2HE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00310/HOU, dated 1 March 2022, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
  - 2) 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.
  - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: PA2-2079-00; PA2-2079-05; PA2-2079-06; PA2-2079-07; PA2-2079-08; PA2-2079-09.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site is a 2 storey house with an attached single storey garage. The garage sits flush with the front wall of the house and is joined to the 2 storey side extension on the neighbouring house. The 2 houses have very different designs. The neighbouring house roof sits lower than the appeal property and has a 2 storey side extension which steps down further and adjoins the boundary with the appeal site. Elsewhere in the street there is a mix of

detached, semi-detached, and terraced houses of different designs and sizes. Side accesses provide gaps between individual houses, pairs of semi-detached houses and terraces of houses. They vary in width but are important to the character and appearance of the street scene by creating spaces which separate different house types.

4. The proposal includes converting the garage into a habitable room and adding a 2 storey side extension which would sit over the top of the garage and extend behind it. Above the ground floor it would be set in 0.5m from the neighbour's extension side wall. The Council is concerned that the gap falls short of the 1m requirement set out in the Council's Design of Residential Extensions and New Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document (2011) (SPD) and could lead to the appearance of a continuous frontage between the houses. Although the set in distance proposed is less than the SPD requirement, and less than the gap between other houses nearby, the appeal site is different to other houses in the street in that it is linked to its neighbour at ground floor level with no side access gap between them.
5. I appreciate that above ground floor level the gap above the existing garage provides a visual break between the 2 houses. However, I am satisfied that the 0.5 metre gap proposed, combined with the difference in height between the 2 houses, and in particular the lower side extension on the neighbouring property, would provide a visual break sufficient to avoid the houses appearing to form part of a terrace, or continuous frontage, which the SPD guidance seeks to avoid. Given these specific circumstances, I do not share the Council's concern that allowing the appeal might set a precedent leading to the loss of other gaps elsewhere in the street. In any case, it would be for the Council to consider each planning application on its merits.
6. I understand the proposed rear ground floor extension was permitted under a previous planning application. The proposal also includes adding a hipped roof to the existing 2 storey projecting rear wing and a second floor rear extension projecting back from the side extension. Both these elements would be subordinate to the main house and would cause no harm to the character or appearance of the house or wider area. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area and there would be no conflict with Policy EN1 of the Council's Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (2009) which requires development to respect and contribute positively to the street scene, or with the aims of the SPD which seeks to avoid development creating a terracing effect.

### **Conditions**

7. The 3 year period in which the planning permission may be implemented is a statutory requirement. Conditions should also be imposed to require the use of matching materials in the interests of appearance and to list the plans in the interest of certainty.

### **Conclusion**

8. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

*P D Sedgwick*

INSPECTOR