
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 November 2022

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/22/3306074

172 Rochester Road, Gravesend DA12 2JF

- 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 Dev Singh against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20220672, dated 21 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 August 2022.
 - The proposed development is a single storey first floor rear extension and proposed front dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. For clarity, the rear dormer does not form part of the proposals and I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character of the dwelling and the surrounding area;
 - the provision of external amenity space; and
 - the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring houses in respect of an overbearing impact.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site relates to a mid-terrace, two-storey property located on Rochester Road near the roundabout with Old Road East and Lower Higham Road. The surrounding area is a mixture of commercial and residential units.
 5. At the front the large dormer window would dominate the roofslope of the property. It would be clearly visible from the public domain, having a jarring effect by virtue of its scale and extent across the pitch of the dwelling, and with no set down from the ridge line of the main house to provide a sense of articulation and relief.
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6. The rear first floor extension would be of an appropriate design and set well away from the boundaries with the adjoining dwellings. To my mind, it would visually connect with the overall appearance of the existing house without dominating it, and also respond to its design characteristics. It would be appropriately sited in relation to the property and would be unobtrusive when seen against the form and scale of the existing building.
7. Although the rear first floor extension is acceptable, I conclude that the front dormer would result in harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area. It would contravene Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (CS) and the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021), which seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

External amenity space

8. The Council's Residential layout guidelines Supplementary planning guidance 2 June 2020 (SPG) states that a dwelling of 4 bedrooms or more should have a minimum private amenity space of 100sq.m and a minimum of 10m garden depth.
9. The existing 3-bed dwelling already has insufficient private amenity space for the current number of bedrooms in the host property; I agree with the Council that the provision of the fourth bedroom in the attic would only exacerbate this.
10. Whilst the appellant contends that an outbuilding in the garden could be reduced in size to increase amenity space, I have not been provided with a plan to demonstrate how this would be achieved. Taking a pragmatic approach, although this could address the matter by matching the ratio of amenity space to the number of bedrooms, in the absence of details (and bearing in mind my findings on character and appearance previously) I consider that the appeal proposal before me would be unacceptable in this respect.
11. The scheme would fail to provide adequate external amenity space and as such would be contrary to Policy CS19 of the CS and the SPG, which aim to safeguard the amenity of the occupants of properties. It would also be inconsistent with the Framework which seeks to ensure safe and healthy living conditions.

Living conditions

12. The first floor rear extension is relatively small, with its rearward projection in particular being of modest extent. Moreover it would be set well away from the boundaries with the adjoining dwellings. On this basis, I am satisfied that whilst it would be visible from the rear gardens of local houses, it would not be so unneighbourly as to warrant a dismissal of the appeal on this ground.
13. The scheme would not be harmful to the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring houses in respect of an overbearing impact. It would meet policy CS19 of the CS and be consistent with the Framework.

Conclusion

14. Having regard to the above and all matters raised, the appeal fails.

C Hall

INSPECTOR