
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 December 2022

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/22/3308560

4 Pine Avenue, Gravesend DA12 1QZ

- 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 Matt Smith against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20220459, dated 27 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is a hip to gable loft extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to a semi-detached, two-storey dwelling with off-street parking to the front. It is located within a row of other buildings of broadly similar size and scale. The wider area is predominantly residential in nature.
4. Alterations to semi-detached properties will inevitably result in an imbalance to an original pair. Many other houses along Pine Avenue have first floor side extensions of varying scale and form, and are part of a pair of semi-detached units where only one of the two has been altered. I observed in particular that 15 Pine Avenue, opposite the appeal site, has been recently re-modelled such that to all intents and purposes the front elevation replicates the appeal proposal, with a barn hip and roof form set flush alongside the ridge line of the host property.
5. Within this context I am of the view that the first floor side element and barn hip to the roof would be acceptable; the proposal would visually connect with the overall appearance of the host dwelling, and reflect the multi-faceted character of the area. Although I acknowledge that no.15 is a different style of property, I have no evidence before me to suggest that its resultant appearance is deleterious to the street scene, indeed I am satisfied that the development has integrated satisfactorily into its setting. Furthermore, any imbalance to the pair of semi-detached houses of which the appeal dwelling is part would not be so harmful to the locale as to warrant a refusal of the appeal on this ground.

6. The loft conversion would include the formation of a flat-roof dormer window in the rear roofslope of the dwelling. Notwithstanding my reasoning in respect of the first floor side extension, I am of the view that this large, unbroken dormer feature would dominate the roof of the property, and the close proximity to the barn hip would result in an awkward relationship between the two forms. Moreover, the fenestration to the rear elevation is misaligned, with the openings offset in relation to those in the floor below. All of which would be clearly visible from the private amenity spaces of surrounding houses and from the public domain on Old Road East, appearing boxy and bulky, and having an intrusive effect by virtue of the scale and extent across the roof of the building.
7. I acknowledge those other matters that have been advanced in support of the development; there would be no adverse harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of surrounding properties, there have been no objections from local residents, and the changes to the layout of the dwelling would meet living requirements for the appellant's family. However, none of these points could justify the harm I have identified above.
8. Therefore, although the first floor side extension is acceptable, I conclude that the rear dormer window would result in harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area. It would be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, which seeks to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Conclusion

9. Taking account of the foregoing and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR