



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2023

by Mark Philpott BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V1505/D/22/3299605

55 Swan Lane, Wickford SS11 7DE

- 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 & Mrs Tuckerman against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00095/FULL, dated 24 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is side two storey extension, rear/side extension over ground floor and part rear extension with new roof fenestration to rear and front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The site relates to a semi-detached property located adjacent to a curve in the Swan Lane highway. It has a simple and attractive front elevation that is timber clad above a brick plinth and which features sash windows and a small porch canopy. Its side elevation is mostly rendered. When viewed from the front, the attached dwelling at No 57 appears to be of similar proportions and have a comparable fenestration arrangement to No 55, albeit its original entrance seems to be blocked off and has a different surround. It also has a mostly pebbledash exterior and much of the land level in front of it is slightly higher than the site's driveway.
4. The area is otherwise characterised by properties of varying ages and styles, with some having been extended or altered. Additionally, there is no firm building line in the vicinity of the highway's curve, with the dwellings at Nos 55 and 57 set close to the highway but with the site featuring a deeper frontage. Nevertheless, the simple and attractive character and appearance of No 55, and the similarities it has with No 57, contribute to the area positively.
5. From Swan Lane, there would be limited visibility of the parts of the scheme that would project beyond the rear of the existing dwelling. Views of the development would also be limited when moving southbound along the highway. However, views of the projections to the front and side of the dwelling would be prominent from in front of the site and when northbound due to the alignment of the highway and an absence of intervening development.

From such positions the proposed two storey side extension element would appear disproportionately narrow and cramped near to the site's side boundary, whereas the porch element would appear unduly large relative to the rest of the dwelling.

6. Furthermore, the front of the dwelling would become staggered, with the porch element, side extension and the rest of it set back from the highway by varying amounts. Although vegetation in the front garden of No 53 would provide some screening from certain positions along Swan Lane, the staggered elements would nevertheless be evident on approach to the site. The scheme would also feature a partly glazed gabled porch feature and ground and first floor windows of differing sizes that would contrast negatively with the existing window arrangement. For these reasons, the front of No 55 would appear cluttered and the simple form of the existing property would be harmed. Moreover, the balanced proportions of and similarities between Nos 55 and 57 would be diluted by the size and design of the extensions.
7. The evidence does not refer to any specific examples of directly comparable development in the vicinity nor did I see any during my visit. In addition, it has been put forward that the porch element would be like that which could be constructed using permitted development rights. However, firm evidence to confirm this has not been provided. Moreover, it would be attached to the other extensions and thus seemingly be far bigger and different in form to a porch constructed using permitted development rights.
8. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. It conflicts with Policy BAS BE12(i) of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007 (LP), which sets out that permission for the alteration and extension of dwellings will be refused if it causes material harm to the character of the surrounding area including the street scene. It also conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), which states at paragraph 130(d) that development should be sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

9. It has been advanced that the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out by paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework, applies as a five year supply of deliverable housing sites cannot be demonstrated and due to the Council's latest Housing Delivery Test results. However, footnote 8 of the Framework makes clear that the presumption applies in such circumstances for schemes involving the provision of housing. The proposal is for householder development to extend a dwelling and would not increase the number of homes in the borough. In addition, I consider that LP Policy BAS BE12 is a most important policy for determining the appeal, relevant to the scheme and not out of date. Accordingly, the presumption does not apply in this case.
10. It has also been put forward that the proposal would make effective use of the land. However, I find otherwise due to harm that would arise for the reasons given above.
11. The scheme is being pursued to provide more space for the appellant's family and I have no reason to doubt that it would provide high quality living accommodation. In addition, it is likely that the shortfall in housing supply and delivery in the borough is impacting on house prices and affordability. I also

note that there would be some temporary economic benefits from the construction of the development. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the site is in a highly accessible location near to the centre of Wickford, which provides a range of services, facilities and sustainable transport options that will undoubtedly be used and thus supported by the occupiers. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole. Material considerations do not outweigh the proposal's conflict with the development plan. Accordingly, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Mark Philpott

INSPECTOR