



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2023

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/D/22/3307357

38 Grantham Road, Great Gonerby, Lincolnshire NG31 8JX

- 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 Robert Bailey against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref S22/0900, dated 29 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension, first floor rear extension, new porch and new double garage.
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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 area.

Reasons

3. No 38 is a detached chalet bungalow standing at the end of a group of five detached dwellings on Grantham Road at the southern edge of the settlement of Great Gonerby. The dwellings are of individual design, though the closest two dwellings to the appeal site are also bungalows with low, shallow roofs. Together, these three bungalows have a degree of consistency in terms of their height and form, although the neighbouring dwellings have larger footprints. Beyond this group of three and separated by a field access is a larger, two storey dwelling and another dwelling heavily concealed by boundary vegetation. To the opposite site of the site is a line of heavy vegetation, beyond which, and also to the rear, is open countryside.
4. The proposal seeks to extend the existing bungalow to the side and rearrange the front elevation with two windows either side of a relocated front door with new porch. At the rear, a double pitched dormer extension would be added at first floor level. A detached double garage is also proposed in front of the side extension.
5. The proposed side extension and rearranged front fenestration with a centred front door would create a symmetrical arrangement. The extension would integrate well in these respects, enlarging the bungalow whilst respecting its relatively modest scale and low profile and providing a balanced overall composition to the front elevation.

6. However, at the rear, the proposed dormer extension would be substantial in scale, extending visibly above the main ridge line, spanning the majority of the width of the enlarged dwelling and extending to the full depth of the rear roof slope, in effect merging with the ground floor wall below to form a two storey structure at the rear. This would result in an awkward, top heavy massing to the rear that would physically dominate the host dwelling.
7. I accept that the massing would not be in clear view from the public realm, but due to the angle of the dwelling on the site, the massing and form of the rear extension would be visible from the footpath on the opposite side of the road. The higher ridge lines would also stand out above the main ridge of the dwelling, adding to the impression of the dormer extension being excessive in size and failing to respect the scale and character of the host dwelling. Dormer windows are also not characteristic of the immediate surroundings, and the added height and bulk would be at odds with the low profile of the adjacent bungalows which is an element of consistency within the street scene. The dormer would also be in clear view from the garden of the adjacent dwelling.
8. The double garage would stand at an angle in front of the proposed side extension and immediately inside the front boundary hedge, which it would be visible above. The two closest neighbouring properties do not have garages to the front. The dwelling beyond has an attached garage projecting forward of the front elevation, but set well back from the front boundary. Given the site marks the end of development on this side, the garage would not necessarily interrupt a consistent pattern and could be viewed as a bookend to the built form. However, as proposed, the garage would stand awkwardly close to and in front of the proposed side extension, impeding views out from within and detracting from the view of the front elevation. I note the appellant's reference to a covenant on the land precluding development to the side of the site, but the garage would still be viewed in context with this remaining space to the side and as a consequence would appear too close to the main dwelling in an overly cramped and imposing position.
9. Overall, whilst I recognise that there is variety to the specific design of dwellings to this side of Grantham Road, the proposed rear dormer extension would create an incongruous mix of single and two storey elements that would fail to respect the modest scale and character of the existing bungalow and erode the similarities the dwelling shares with its closest neighbours in terms of height and form. The conspicuous and cramped position of the detached garage would be another uncharacteristic element that would further draw the eye and exacerbate the discordant appearance of the development in the street scene.
10. In reaching a view, I have had regard to a development in Grantham referred to by the appellant. I am not provided with the full particulars of the case to understand its exact circumstances, but I note that it was for a different form of extension and located in a different area and as such, I am not persuaded that the two schemes are directly comparable. Similarly, other examples of garages nearby are not comparable to the appeal scheme as those on the opposite side of Grantham Road are set well back from the main road and screened by vegetation, and others are located on a different road with a different context. Consequently, these other examples are not decisive factors in my assessment of the proposal, which I have considered on its own merits.

11. For the reasons set out, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the area. This is contrary to Policy DE1 of the South Kesteven Local Plan 2011-2036 (January 2020) which requires proposals to reinforce local identity and not have an adverse impact on the street scene, settlement pattern or the landscape/townscape character of the surrounding area, and to be appropriate in terms of factors such as scale, massing and height. Further conflict arises with the Council's Design Guidelines for Rutland & South Kesteven Supplementary Planning Document which sets out that extensions will be expected to respect the wider surroundings in terms of scale, position, design and building materials.
12. Additionally, the proposal would fail to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, which makes it clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; that developments should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture; and that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Other Matters

13. The proposal would provide additional living space for the appellant. However, this is primarily a private benefit rather than a public one. Moreover, there is no evidence before me that other options to extend the dwelling have been fully explored. As such, I afford this consideration very limited weight.
14. I note reference to a subsequent application to the Council for a revised scheme. I have not been provided with any details of this scheme, including whether or not it has been determined by the Council. As such, it has had no bearing on my assessment of this proposal, which has been treated on its own merits.
15. The Council did not refuse the application in terms of the effect on neighbours' living conditions or highway safety. I have no compelling reasons to reach different conclusions, but an absence of harm in these respects means they are neutral factors in the planning balance.

Conclusion

16. The proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, resulting in conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole. Material considerations in this case would not outweigh this conflict.
17. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

K. Savage

INSPECTOR