



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2023

by E Grierson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V1505/D/22/3305792

The Fens, Crays Hill, Billericay, Essex CM11 2YA

- 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 Watson against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00528/FULL, dated 12 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as a front gable extension and re-modelling including removing 2nd floor dormers, rear single and two storey extensions and partial basement level and general re-modelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is occupied by a two-storey detached dwelling with additional rooms in the roof that are served by front and rear dormer windows. The surrounding area is residential in nature with a broad variety in the design and scale of properties. Many of the surrounding dwellings have undergone various alterations and extensions, including the appeal property, which is larger than most in the area, thereby giving it a prominent appearance in the streetscene. The proposed development includes a front gable extension, single storey and two-storey rear extensions and a basement extension.
4. The proposed front gable extension would replace the existing dormers on the front elevation. However, whilst this would match the height of the existing dwelling and is intended to give the appearance of a two storey dwelling, its overall scale and projection forward of the existing front elevation would add substantial bulk to the front of the property. This would have a greater visual impact on the host dwelling than the modest size of the existing dormers and the increased bulk at roof level would result in a top-heavy appearance. Furthermore, due to its location, the proposed front extension would be highly visible from the road and would substantially increase the prominence of the dwelling in the streetscene to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. This would be particularly incongruous when compared to the modest scale and design of the surrounding properties.

5. The proposed extension to the rear would have limited visibility from the public realm, with only glimpses of the flank elevations possible. Therefore, it would not have a significant impact on the streetscene or the character and appearance of the surrounding area. There would be a large amount of glazing on the rear elevation, with a variety of fenestration styles. However, these would be well aligned and would not appear incongruous in this residential setting. However, the rear extensions, would be significant in scale and would add substantial bulk to the rear of the dwelling, principally at roof level. This would give the dwelling a full three-storey appearance, when compared to the more modest scale of the existing rear dormers, which would engulf and appear disproportionate to the simple form of the existing property.
6. The Council raise no objections to the proposed basement extension. I agree with this finding as it would have limited visibility above ground level. Therefore, this element of the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or surrounding area.
7. Nevertheless, for the reasons above, I conclude that both the proposed front and rear extensions would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling. I have also found that the proposed front extension would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies (2007) which seeks to ensure that the alteration and extension of existing dwellings do not harm the character of the surrounding area. It would also be contrary to the general design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework in paragraphs 126 and 130.
8. The proposal has been amended after feedback from the Council at pre-application stage. However, I do not consider that these changes are sufficient to overcome the harm I have identified above.

Other Matters

9. Two developments within the vicinity of the appeal site have been brought to my attention. These include an existing dwelling which was granted planning permission¹ for various alterations and extensions. However, the setting of this dwelling and the resultant appearance of the property is somewhat different to the proposal before me. The other development was granted planning permission² for replacement of a single dwelling with two new dwellings. Although they are two-storeys in height and more modern in appearance than the surrounding dwellings, they are generally in keeping with the scale of the surrounding properties and do not appear as incongruous additions to the streetscene. Therefore, I do not consider that either of these developments are comparable to the appeal proposal before me and do not set a precedent for the proposed development.
10. The appellant considers that the appeal site is within a sustainable location with good access to services and facilities and that making the best use of this site would relieve pressure for new development on other locations. However, as the proposal does not include any additional dwellings on the site, these matters are not relevant to my overall consideration of the appeal.

¹ 13/01121/FULL (Rectory, Church Lane, Ramsden Crays, Billericay, Essex CM11 2UN)

² 17/00236/FULL (14 Bromfelde Road, Billericay, Essex CM11 2XT)

11. It is noted that the proposed development received no objections from the Parish Council or any third party representatives. The Council also found that the proposal would not result in harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings or highways safety. However, these are neutral factors which would not weigh in favour of the proposed development.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Grierson

INSPECTOR