



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2023

By Terrence Kemmann-Lane JP DipTP FRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/23/3314445

1 Huntingfield Road, Meopham, Gravesend, DA13 0EY

- 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 Mrs Emma Betteridge against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20221217, dated 10 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 3 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of first floor side extension including dormer extension in rear roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the relationship of the proposed first floor side extension to the existing dwelling and whether it would conserve and enhance the character of the existing house and the surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached house, with the frontage part landscaped and part hard-paved, used as a driveway with an attached side garage. With its neighbour, No.12 Longfield Road, it sits at a slight angle on the junction of the 2 roads.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) places considerable emphasis on good design. As paragraph 126 notes, *"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities"*.
5. The Gravesend Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (Design SPD) (2021) is a recent design guide which follows accepted principles in achieving satisfactory designs for extensions to dwellings and is in accordance with this element of the Framework. The Design SPD has a number of criteria for first floor side extensions:
 - i) be set back behind the main front building line
 - ii) avoid dominating the original property

- iii) be no greater than half the width of the host
- iv) have a minimum gap of 1 metre between the extension and the flank boundary
- v) be subservient to the main property roof
- vi) use matching external materials and window/door frames.

In the council's view, criterion iv) is partly met, and criterion vi) is met.

6. The appellant explains that there are various existing examples of extensions in the vicinity that support the proposal. The aim of the extension is to meet the demands of a growing family and support the hybrid way of home/office working. The design minimises the complexity of the construction by extending directly above the garage, thus using the existing materials in a sustainable way. The proposal to build directly above the existing garage keeps it in proportion to the existing dwelling. The proposal would produce a landmark feature.
7. The Design SPD criteria are guidance, and there may be occasions when a departure may be justified in a successful design. However, I am satisfied that the appeal proposal would produce an excessively large addition to the house in its current form. The existing ensemble of elements, whereby the garage carries through the line of the front canopy and follows the plane of its roof, with the ridgeline well below the main roof, does not dominate the original house, but the integrates into a satisfactory whole. The appeal proposal fails to achieve a satisfactory relationship, becoming a dominating and unbalancing addition. The slight drop-down in the ridge, below the main roof, only adds an incongruous element. I conclude that the proposed first floor side extension would fail to conserve and enhance the character of the existing house, which in turn would be detrimental to the appearance of the immediate area.
8. I note that there are examples of extensions in the locality that could be said to have similar characteristics to the appeal proposal. I understand that these were permitted when different policies were in place. Be that as it may, it is important to ensure that new development meets current objectives for lifting the quality of development so that it enhances both the donor property and the surrounding character. Naturally I can see the benefit of adding accommodation to meet family and home working needs, as well as building on the existing structure as far as possible. But these cannot be the overriding considerations when an uplift in design standards is an important public policy.
9. For the reasons given, I will dismiss the appeal.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR