



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2023

by L Reid BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/23/3314977

57 St Albans Close, Gravesend DA12 5SF

- 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 Ms Ilona Cwierzona against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20220257, dated 8 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the single storey side extension containing storage facilities and demolition of detached garage and erection of the new detached garage with storage facilities in the attic.
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Decision

1. This appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the planning application form. Although it is different to that on the decision notice, no confirmation has been provided that the change to the wording of the description was agreed by both parties.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached house which is angled within its plot and benefits from a generously sized garden. Due to the position of the house and its open frontage, views of the front and side of the site are easily seen from approaches into the cul-de-sac. The surrounding area is residential in character with houses which appear of a similar age and design, some of which have single storey side extensions set back from the front elevation.
5. The proposed garage would be visually separate to the host property with a rotated roof whose ridge would be lower than the ridge of the main roof. I accept that the garage would not exceed the height of the main roof. However, the eaves of the garage would be level with the eaves of the main roof, giving it a similar visual status as the house. The garage would also closely compare to the footprint, depth, and width of the house. It would undermine the visual hierarchy between the house and the more ancillary, utilitarian structure which would stand beside it. As a result, unlike the plots which surround it, the garage would not appear as subordinate within its context.

6. I accept that the garage would not extend beyond the principal elevation of the house. However, it would be highly visible in the street due to the openness of the site. As a result of its height and scale, the garage would stand out as an imposing structure. The double storey nature of the garage would also be at odds with the modest single storey extensions that I saw at my site visit. The proposal would therefore represent an incongruous form of development in this area, causing significant harm to its character and appearance.
7. For these reasons, the proposal would conflict with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) which among other things, seeks new development that takes account of the scale and height of adjoining buildings, integrates well with the surrounding local area, and makes a positive contribution to the street scene. The proposal would also conflict with Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework which indicates that decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

8. I note the suggested use of high-quality materials and landscaping, however no substantive evidence has been put before me to demonstrate this would sufficiently mitigate the garage's visual and overall harmful prominence.
9. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide additional storage and secure parking benefiting the occupants. However, these benefits carry limited weight and would not outweigh the harmful effects to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, I find that the proposal conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations that have been shown to carry sufficient weight to indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Reid

INSPECTOR