



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 October 2023

by N Perrins BSc (hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14.11.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B1415/D/23/3326559

1 Manston Way, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 2TA

- 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 and Mrs David Webster against the decision of Hastings Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: HS/FA/23/00249, dated 5 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 7 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is for two storey side extension with two parking spaces to the front of the property.
-

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 appeal site comprises a two storey semi-detached house on a corner plot with Manston Way and Thanet Way. The property has a large open garden area that wraps around the front and side of the site; this garden area has a low brick wall approximately 0.5m in height providing boundary treatment to the site. There is also a rear garden to the property, which is screened and separated from the side garden with a concrete block wall approximately 1.6m in height. There is a garage and off street parking for one vehicle at the rear of the site accessed from Thanet Way. The character of the area is residential with properties exhibiting a uniform style and set back from the road generally behind low brick walls or fences.
4. The appeal proposal comprises a two-storey side extension that would be built in the side garden area. A driveway for two cars is proposed at the front of the dwelling. A key character feature of the area is a sense of openness with buildings set within green and open gardens areas. The appeal site contributes positively to this with its open and side garden area and is a prominent presence within the street scene that can be seen from various viewpoints. The proposal to build a two storey side extension into the side garden area and move the building line to 1.3m from the boundary would significantly erode the sense of openness on this prominent corner plot site. This impact would be exacerbated by the appeal proposal being over 7 metres long, which at two

storeys would result in an overly dominant and overbearing building in place of the existing open corner.

5. I note the appellant has drawn attention to examples where high timber fencing has been erected seeking to demonstrate that the character of the area has changed and no longer as open as it once was. Whilst I acknowledge this, there are relatively few examples and their presence has not materially affected the openness of the area. They are also different forms of development to the two storey proposal subject of this appeal, which due to its much greater height would have a far more prominent impact than the high timber fencing. Moreover, the absence of enforcement action for any of the fences does not validate these features as being acceptable. In this context, I give the presence of other boundary treatment only limited weight and it does not outweigh the harm I have identified from the appeal scheme having assessed its specific impact on the character of the area.
6. I also understand that the appellant wants to extend their home to meet the needs of their growing family. Whilst I give this matter limited weight, it does not overcome the harm I have identified to the character of the area.
7. In summary, the appeal proposal would harm the character of the area by the loss of openness at this prominent corner plot. I conclude, therefore, that the appeal scheme does not comply with Policies SC1 of the Hastings Local Plan – The Hastings Planning Strategy (2014) and DM1 of the Hastings Local Plan – Development Management Plan (2015), which amongst other things require high quality distinctive architecture and development that protects and enhances local character. The appeal proposal would also not be consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), and Planning Practice Guidance which seeks to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

8. There is no dispute between the parties regarding the impact on living conditions or the proposed driveway. I agree that the proposed design and use of surfacing of the driveway would be acceptable in terms of highway safety, flood risk and impact on the character of the area and that there would be no harm to living conditions. These are, however, neutral factors in my decision and do not change my conclusions with regard to the proposed two-storey side extension in terms of the harm it would cause to the character of the area.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the policies of the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that would lead me to a different conclusion. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Perrins

INSPECTOR