



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2023

by E Catcheside BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/23/3326727

86 Southend Road, Grays, Thurrock RM17 5NW

- 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 Mohammed Shuhel Ahmed against the decision of Thurrock Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00451/HHA, dated 18 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing shed and construction of two storey side extension and part first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of existing shed and construction of two storey side extension and part first floor rear extension at 86 Southend Road, Grays, Thurrock RM17 5NW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/00451/HHA, dated 18 April 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 19/240/001, 19/240/002, 19/240/003, 19/240/004, and 19/240/005.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property occupies a corner plot at the junction of Southend Road and Tennyson Avenue. The area is characterised by two-storey semi-detached blocks with double height projecting bay windows and hipped roofs. The dwellings are set back from the highway by driveways. There is a broadly similar front building line along Southend Road, and more noticeable consistency along Tennyson Avenue. A number of dwellings in the area have been altered or extended, which has added some variety to the street scene. Piggs Corner, a large two-storey building, lies opposite the appeal site with frontages facing Southend Road and Tennyson Avenue.

4. The host dwelling is paired with 84 Southend Road, which has been substantially extended, albeit the evidence indicates those extensions have occurred incrementally over a number of years. The proposed extensions to the appeal property would be slightly, but not significantly, wider than those at No 84 and would be of similar scale and mass. The proposal would provide a seamless extension to the ridgeline with No 84 and would replicate its height, hipped roof form, and front and rear building lines. Accordingly, the proposal would rebalance the property with its pair in terms of its width, scale, and bulk.
5. The side extension would incorporate a second double height projecting bay, with gable end feature. Whilst this would not directly mirror the appearance of No 84, it would replicate the host building's original design features and, therefore, would not be an incongruent addition.
6. The side and rear elevations of the extended dwelling would be visible from public vantage points, including on Tennyson Avenue. However, the extensions would remain subservient to the existing dwelling because the hipped roof would be set at a lower ridge height. The extensions would add bulk and mass to the host dwelling. However, the additions would not be unduly prominent when viewed in context with Piggs Corner on the other side of Tennyson Avenue.
7. The proposal would project forward of the front building line on Tennyson Avenue. It would therefore be inconsistent with the Thurrock Design Guide: Residential Alterations & Extensions SPD 2017 (SPD), which expects corner developments to respect the building line on both affected streets. However, in this instance the host dwelling is set apart from the nearest property on Tennyson Avenue by its rear garden and outbuildings. This has led to some fragmentation of the building line in the vicinity of the appeal site. Accordingly, the development would respond positively to the respective street scenes and would not cause unacceptable impacts upon them, despite its conflict with the SPD guidance. Moreover, some space would be retained between the side elevation of the proposal and the boundary with the highway. Therefore, there would be no material harm to longer views along Tennyson Avenue towards Southend Road.
8. I conclude that the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It, therefore, does not conflict with policies CSTP22, CSTP23 and PMD2 of the Thurrock Local Development Framework: Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (as amended) 2015 (LDF). These policies, when taken together and amongst other things, seek high quality design that responds to local context and contributes positively to the protection, management and enhancement of local character in Thurrock. The policies are consistent with the design objectives set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

9. The evidence indicates that a number of previous applications to extend the appeal property have been refused planning permission. I have limited information before me about those proposals. However, based on the evidence, the planning history of the site is not a determinative matter in my consideration of the appeal as I have necessarily considered the proposal on its own merits.

10. It is common ground between the parties that the principle of the development is acceptable, given the site is in a residential location and near to a number of other extended and altered properties.
11. Furthermore, no harm has been identified in respect of the living conditions of neighbours, highway safety and parking. Based on the evidence, and my own observations, I have no reason to take a different view. The absence of harm carries neutral weight in the determination of the appeal.

Conditions

12. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have attached a condition to define the permitted drawings to provide certainty.
13. I have also included a condition requiring external materials to match those used in the existing building. This condition is required to protect the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

14. The proposal is in accordance with the development plan when read as a whole. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal is allowed.

E Catcheside

INSPECTOR