
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2024

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17.01.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/23/3333456

184 Barnstaple Road, Thorpe Bay, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, SS1 3PP

- 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 Sam Gowreea against the decision of Southend-on-Sea City Council.
 - The application Ref. 23/01437/FULH, dated 7 September 2023, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is front extension, side extension and garage conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but as the parties have not provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed I have used the one given on the original application.
3. Since the appeal was lodged a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published. The policies of most relevance to this proposal have not changed fundamentally and so it has not been necessary to seek further comments from the parties.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property, the streetscene and the wider area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached house sited opposite the entrance to a cul-de-sac comprising a group of dwellings similar in style, but with some different house types, detailing and materials. The dwellings lining either side of the road have semi-integral projecting front garages, but the dwellings in between, which includes the appeal property, have attached garages to one side. The appeal dwelling has some prominence due to its position in the road, but this is tempered by its distance back from the main carriageway of Barnstaple Road, the intervening trees on a central greensward, and the limited passing 'traffic' within the cul-de-sac itself.

6. The appeal property and the neighbouring dwelling, No. 182, have a greater degree of separation at first-floor level than prevails in the streetscene as a result of their own garages and a shared pedestrian access in between. In contrast, most other dwellings in the group are more closely spaced, and as such the gap between Nos. 184 and 182 is not typical or characteristic.
7. The proposed side extension would close part of this gap, but to retain a reasonable spacing at first-floor level the extension includes a contrived inset, leaving a narrow pitched roof above the garage. This would conflict with the guidance in the published Design and Townscape Guide 2009 (DTG), that narrowing an extension at first-floor level creates an unacceptable design and must be avoided. Whilst this is guidance only, in this case the narrow first-floor inset would appear an incongruous detail given the design and form of the host house. However, even if a similar extension were to be built at No.182, the reduction in openness at this point would not materially harm the streetscene.
8. In terms of proportion, the narrow extension could be regarded as subservient to the host house. However, in other respects it would be a dominant feature due to the reasonably modest recess behind the front elevation, and the negligible set down of the roof. This impact would be exacerbated by the introduction of rendered walls in contrast to the brick and tile hanging of the main front elevation. I am mindful that the position of the dwelling in the cul-de-sac would limit its wider public visibility, but there is nevertheless a requirement to secure good design in all development.
9. In terms of detailed design, the position of the proposed first-floor front window would be guided by the functioning of the layout, but would be misaligned with the existing openings. The current level of the garage door relative to the ground floor windows is less noticeable than proposed, being set further back on the building, and without the expanse of blank wall above. These matters of detail may not be significant in themselves, but cumulatively create the incongruous design of the proposed side extension. The appellant has drawn attention to other dwellings locally with misaligned windows and blank walls above garages, but as part of original dwelling designs they do not have the same discordance as the proposal.
10. As a result, the proposal would conflict with Policy DM3 of the Southend Development Management Document 2015 (DMD), which requires additions to make a positive contribution to the character of the original building and the surrounding area through the use of materials and detailing that draws reference from the original building, and ensures successful integration with it, and by adopting a scale that is respectful and subservient.
11. Individually designed porches are not a feature of the dwellings in this group. However, with its modest footprint and height, the proposed porch would appear proportionate to the façade of the dwelling. The proposed pitched roof may differ from others in the immediate vicinity, but is a typical design approach, and would fit comfortably with the architectural style of the host house. Whilst it is not for this appeal to determine whether or not an extension is Permitted Development, I note the appellant's assessment that the size of the porch would satisfy the criteria of Class D of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order.
12. This is a modified scheme and I note the alterations which have been made since the previous application was refused, but for the reasons outlined above

the proposed side extension would cause harm in its own right. I find the proposed single storey rear extension and conversion of the garage to be acceptable in all regards but this does not alter my assessment of the side extension.

13. I therefore conclude that the proposed side extension would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, the streetscene and the wider area. It would conflict with Southend Core Strategy 2007 Policies KP2 and CP4, which seek to secure a high quality urban environment; and with DMD Policies DM3 and DM1, which amongst other criteria requires development to add to the overall quality of the area and to respect the character of the site, its local context and surroundings in matters including architectural approach, height, size, scale, form, massing, proportions, materials and detailed design features; and with guidance in the DTG.
14. For the same reasons, the proposal would be at odds with the requirements in the Framework, as supported by the National Design Guide, to ensure that developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.
15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR