
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: 25.01.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/23/3333677

32 Sutherland Boulevard, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3PS

- 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 Sean Boshell against the decision of Southend-on-Sea City Council.
 - The application Ref. 23/01296/FULH, dated 3 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 26 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is to erect part single/part two storey rear extension with balcony to first floor and single storey side extension and alter rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development above has been taken from the Council's decision notice and the appellant's appeal form. Whilst normally this would be taken from the original application form, it is clear from the plans and accompanying details that the development included a balcony and alterations to dormer. The Council dealt with the proposal on this basis and I have done the same.
3. Since the appeal was lodged a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published. However, as the policies of most relevance to this proposal have not changed fundamentally 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 semi-detached dwelling prominently located at the junction of Sutherland Boulevard and Henry Drive. The original design of the semi-detached pair is quite distinctive, and despite extensions to the attached property, No. 30, the original form is evident. Due to the local topography, the appeal property and No.30 are slightly elevated above Henry Drive to the side, and their roofs and distinctive rear dormer windows are clearly visible in the streetscene.

6. The detailing of the proposed extension would largely reflect that of the host house, and the width, half hipped roof, ridge height and side inset of the first-floor element would give it a degree of subservience. There would also be a clear distinction between the original house and proposed extensions. However, the proposed depth, particularly at first-floor, would create a large, bulky and disproportionate addition to the dwelling that would be apparent when viewed from the public domain. Whilst the 'head-on' front elevation will appear little changed, the flank elevation facing Henry Drive is equally prominent and would be much altered. Due to the corner position of the appeal site, the dominance of the extension would be apparent from a number of viewpoints.
7. The visual impact of the proposal would be exacerbated by the mix of features, including the balcony and altered dormer window, and I share the Council's view that the design would lack cohesion. The first-floor extension may screen views of the dormer window, but having regard to the wireline images provided, I am not convinced that it would screen the roof terrace, nor that the appeal property and No.30 would not be viewed together from Henry Drive, as suggested by the appellant.
8. This residential area comprises a mix of buildings, many of which have been extended. The appellant has drawn attention to this variety, although limited information within the 'Supplementary Documentation' has been provided of the reasoning for the planning permissions granted; none appear to be directly comparable to the proposal in terms of design, proportion relative to the host house, and/or street context, and some are not positive examples. As such, although this diversity supports the principle of extension to the appeal property, it offers limited justification for this specific proposal.
9. The appellant indicates that the ground floor part of the extension would not be dissimilar to that which could be created using Permitted Development rights. However, any 'fallback' extension would not be as deep or as tall as the proposal, and therefore would have materially less visual impact on the property and the streetscene. Any benefit of including a flat roof in this scheme to minimise height would be offset by the visual impact of the balustrade and any furniture and other domestic paraphernalia that may be added to the roof terrace.
10. In this context, the proposal would not accord with Policy DM1 of the Southend on Sea Development Management Document 2015 (DMD), which 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 terms including size, scale, massing, proportions and detailed design features; nor with DMD Policy DM3, which expects building additions to make a positive contribution to the character of the original building and the surrounding area, and to adopt a scale that is respectful and subservient.
11. I appreciate the reasoning behind the proposal, and am sympathetic to the appellant's family needs. I also note that this is a revised proposal, and that the amendments made have gone some way to reducing the adverse impact on the property and in the streetscene. However, for the reasons outlined above, the resultant scale of providing the additional accommodation in the form proposed would give rise to an unacceptable visual impact in its own right.

12. The Council does not oppose the single storey side extension and I find it acceptable in all regards, but this does not alter my assessment of the remainder of the development.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, the streetscene and wider area. This would be contrary to the overarching design aims set out in the Council's Core Strategy 2007 Policies KP2 and CP4, DMD Policies DM1 and DM3, and advice in the Council's Design and Townscape Guide 2009, which expects rear extensions to integrate with the character of the parent building in terms of scale. It would also be in conflict with the Framework, as supported by the National Design Guide, which seeks to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings that add to the overall quality of the area.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR