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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2024

**by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 23 February 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/23/3335261**

**The Forge House, Warren Road, Southfleet DA13 9NN**

- 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 Billy Nash, against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
  - The application Ref DA/23/00903/FUL, dated 27 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2023.
  - The development proposed is a first floor side extension, single storey side extension and external alterations.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor side extension, single storey side extension and external alterations, at The Forge House, Warren Road, Southfleet DA13 9NN, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DA/23/00903/FUL, dated 27 July 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: FORGE-HOUSE-01 Rev A and FORGE-HOUSE-02 Rev A.
  - 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 dwelling.
  - 4) Prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted, the window at first floor in the side elevation facing towards The Smithy shall be installed with obscured glass and with any opening being at a minimum height of 1.7m above internal floor level. The window shall thereafter be retained in accordance with these details.

## Main issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Southfleet Conservation Area, within which the site is located. In reaching my decision I have applied Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that when assessing proposals for new development within a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance.

## Reasons

3. The Council's Southfleet Conservation Area Appraisal identifies Warren Road as a small ribbon of mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century housing where the scale is domestic. The key character is given as the central crossroads of the village. Other important aspects include the domestic properties contrasting with the major buildings such as the church, views of the church tower and Church Cottages, as well as the lack of modern kerbed footpaths.
4. The appeal concerns an end of terrace dwelling where there is a two storey rear projection with its mono-pitched roof sloping down towards the side wall. There is a single storey part to the side of this so that additions extend across the full width of the dwelling. Other ground floor extensions are attached to the end of the property.
5. These are not attractive features with the somewhat harsh asymmetry of the double floor projection contrasting with the noticeably balanced and symmetrical two storey features found elsewhere at the back of the terrace. The combination of four different additions, with three at single storey height, gives the rear elevation of Forge House a particularly disjointed appearance.
6. The new rear projection would have a fairly central ridge with a dual pitched roof sloping down to each side. There would be centrally located windows in the rear elevation at ground and first floor height with the lower being larger. As a result, the addition would have a particularly symmetrical appearance. It would also reflect and reinforce the balanced nature of the other rear projections in the terrace, while also giving it and the host dwelling an appreciably more attractive and unified appearance.
7. The new two storey projection would span the full width of the rear elevation, while also being larger, project further to the rear and be taller than the other projections in the terrace. However, the extent of the rearward projection would be about the same as the existing outrigger at Forge House. Moreover, it would only be fairly modestly higher with its ridge set noticeably below that of the main roof.
8. Furthermore, the hipped end would result in it having a significantly less bulky form than the vertically rising rear face of the existing projection and those at other dwellings in the terrace. Despite its full width, the overall additional bulk would not be excessive either in relation to the host property or terrace. This would largely arise at the side of the outrigger where there are single storey additions, with the new roof over the floor above sloping down to the side and limiting the increase in bulk.
9. At my site visit I saw that views from Dale Road and the Village Hall grounds would mainly be limited to glimpses of the property against the backdrop of the host terrace due to factors such as the presence of buildings and boundary fencing. The clearest view from Dale Road would be from just beyond the junction with Warren Road where the side profile of the extension would be seen for a relatively short distance. However, given the fairly similar depth and hipped form of the new projection, there would be no impression of any significant additional bulk. It would be visible from Warren Road above the proposed single storey side extension to the front of the site. However, given the fairly narrow gap and angle this would only be a glimpse. Furthermore, I was not able to find any public viewpoints from where it might be possible to

readily gain an appreciation of the size and bulk of the rear projections in the overall terrace relative to that now proposed.

10. Due to the above factors, the rear addition would not be unacceptably large or substantial. Despite the use of matching materials at ground floor level, matters such as the scale, mass, bulk and design would be appropriate and sympathetic both in relation to the host dwelling and terrace. The projection would not appear overly dominant, visually obtrusive or prominent, with no adverse visual impact in relation to any available public views.
11. The door at the front of the house would be replaced with a window and a new entrance provided in the single storey side extension. The front of the terrace is not uniform as there are front doors into porches and others with just canopies above. At the opposite end of the terrace to Forge House there is a front door in a single storey side addition, as now proposed. In this context, the proposed alteration would be appropriate in relation to the host dwelling, while serving to balance the overall terrace.
12. In consequence, there would be no adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and terrace. For the above reasons, it is concluded that the significance of the Conservation Area would not be diminished with its character and appearance being preserved.
13. There would be compliance with Policies DP2, DP7, DP12 and DP13 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan 2017 and Policies M1, M5, M6 and M11 of the emerging Dartford Local Plan. Taken together and among other things these intend that development should create high quality places, respond to, reinforce and enhance positive aspects of the locality having regard to height, mass, form and scale and should not be visually obtrusive while contributing to the conservation of the historic environment. It is also intended that the statutory duty referred to above should apply to proposals in Conservation Areas.
14. There would be no conflict with Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework, where it is indicated that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
15. Taking account of all other matters raised, given the absence of any detrimental impact it is determined that the appeal succeeds. A condition specifying the approved plans is necessary to provide certainty. The facing materials should match those of the existing dwelling in order to protect the appearance of the Area. To safeguard the privacy of the adjacent occupiers the upper floor window in the side of the development facing The Smithy should be glazed with obscured glass and have a restricted opening.

*M Evans*

INSPECTOR