

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2024

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/23/3333168

4 Oast Cottages, Breach Lane, Upchurch, Kent, ME9 7PH

- 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 S Greensted against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 23/503674/FULL, dated 7 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear and side extension.
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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 appeal property, the terrace of which it forms part, and the countryside.

Reasons

3. The appeal property forms one end of a short terrace located in a rural location. The dwelling has a two-storey side extension plus single-storey side porch and rear addition, with the opposite end-terraced house having a single-storey side lean-to. The terrace also contains front and rear dormer windows and rooflights which differ in size. However, none of these additions have undermined the original form and balance of the terrace façade. The rear elevation is more altered, with the mix of materials and alterations more clearly distinguishing the separate dwellings.
4. Viewed from the rear, the narrow proportions of the original terraced dwellings is most apparent, and the dormer windows add to the vertical emphasis. Viewed from Breach Lane, the cottages 'read' as a single building with a strong horizontal emphasis, as noted by the appellant. This view is supported by a single doorway in the terrace façade (excluding the set back porch of the appeal property), which adds to the perception of one large building.
5. The existing two-storey side extension at the appeal property appears proportionate to the dwelling and terrace due to its reasonably narrow width. In contrast, the proposed side extension would be wider and deeper, and would result in an overly large and dominant feature on the property. It would be highly visible in the street scene due to its size and its position next to the open driveway, and close to the road. Whilst I appreciate the aim to provide

- continuity of design, this would not be secured by the use of matching materials.
6. Amongst other criteria, Policy DM 16 of 'Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017' (LP), requires building extensions to be of an appropriate design which responds positively to the style and character of the building being extended, to be appropriately scaled in relation to the building and its surroundings, and to maintain or enhance (where applicable) the character of the street scene. Within the rural areas, LP Policy DM 11 supports extensions where they are of an appropriate scale, mass, and appearance in relation to the location. In making such an assessment, the policy requires regard to any previous extensions undertaken.
 7. In this context, whether considered in its own right or cumulatively with the previous extensions to the dwelling, the proposal would not respect the scale and mass of the host house. The resultant sprawling layout would be at odds with the shallower, linear form of the original terrace. Even taking into account the horizontal emphasis of the terrace façade, an addition of the depth and width proposed would not reflect or be sympathetic to the original form.
 8. The appellant advises that the small dwelling footprint gives a restrictive living area for a 5-bedroom, 6/7-person, property. I appreciate that the proposal would offer more flexible accommodation as suggested by the appellant, but as proposed the additional space would be at the expense of the character and appearance of the property, the terrace, and its countryside setting.
 9. As part of the application an alternative layout plan was provided which included an integral single garage, to demonstrate that the proposal would be equivalent to the addition of a garage onto Breach Lane. However, as it is the proposed size and scale of the extension rather than its use which would have an adverse impact, I have placed limited weight on this argument.
 10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, the terrace of which it forms part, and the countryside, in conflict with the overarching design requirements of LP Policies CP 4 and DM 14, and with LP Policies DM 11 and DM 16.
 11. I find no conflict with paragraph 5.0 of the Supplementary Planning Guidance, "Designing an Extension - A Guide for Householders", referred to in the reason for refusal, as it relates to the provision of side extensions in areas of mainly detached or semi-detached housing. However, that does not alter my conclusions outlined above.
 12. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR