



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2024

by B Pattison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B1550/W/23/3332314

37 Great Eastern Road, Hockley, Essex, SS5 4BX

- 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 Neil Cochran against the decision of Rochford District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/00543/FUL
 - The development proposed is construction of new 2 bedroom dwelling to the side of No.37. Alterations to No.37 including proposed rear extension and part first floor extension internal alterations and new front pitched roof porch. Form new crossover for additional parking accessed from Spa Close.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (Framework) was updated in December 2023, and accordingly for the purposes of this decision I have referred to the latest version of the Framework. The content of the Framework has not been materially altered in respect of the main issue which I have considered. Therefore, it has not been necessary to seek further views from the main parties in this instance.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is one half of a pair of semi-detached properties. Properties on this side of Great Eastern Road are generally set back from the highway with small parking areas to the front and gardens to the rear. There is a wide variety of properties fronting the road including bungalows and two storey houses which are both detached and semi-detached. Similarly, there is a mix of external materials which include facing brickwork, render and pebble dash, with a mixture of pitched and hipped roofs, sometimes with gable ends on the front elevations.
5. The proposal would have a deep footprint. This would create an expansive two storey north facing side elevation, which would have minimal features to soften its appearance. As the neighbouring property to the north is a bungalow positioned at a slightly lower ground level, the proposal's side elevation would be very prominent in public views from Great Eastern Road. When viewed from the north, the side elevation would appear as a stark and obtrusive feature

within the street scene, and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.

6. The appellant has referred to a number of developments within the local area. From my observations many of these appear to relate to extensions to dwellings rather than new dwellings. Regardless, during my site visit I was able to note that large, stark and prominent side elevations are not a common occurrence, and therefore I do not find that the referenced developments represent a precedent. In any event, each case must be considered on its own merits.
7. In views from the front of the property, the proposal would increase the width and bulk and would alter the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached houses, as any side projection would. However, the extension would be subservient to the existing pair of semi's as a result of its set back front elevation and subservient roof height.
8. The location of the front door within the proposal's side elevation would contribute to its subordinate appearance. The pattern of fenestration would create articulation within the front elevation which would soften its appearance. The proposed external materials and fenestration on the front elevation would be consistent with the adjoining properties, and would therefore, reinforce the character and appearance of this particular street scene and the wider area.
9. On balance, given the impact of the large, stark side elevation, I conclude that the proposal would not accord with Policy CP1 of the Local Development Framework - Core Strategy Adopted Version (2011), Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Development Management Plan (2014) and the Supplementary Planning Document 2 – Housing Design (2007) insofar as they require development to promote good, high quality design that has regard to local flavour.
10. The proposal also conflicts with paragraph 135 of the Framework which states that development should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

Other Matters

11. The Framework seeks to significantly boost housing supply and indicates the value of using suitable land within settlements for homes. It also encourages the optimal use of underutilised land. The proposal would contribute to local housing supply and would represent a more efficient use of the appeal site. However, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that the Council is failing to meet the needs for housing in its area. There would also be some economic benefit arising from the construction process and ongoing expenditure into the local economy by future occupants. However, together these benefits attract only moderate weight, given the scale of the development.
12. I acknowledge that residential development in this general location is acceptable in principle and the proposal may be compliant with various other provisions of the development plan, for instance providing policy compliant car parking. However, the absence of harm or conflict with other relevant development plan policies is a neutral factor and does not weigh in favour of the proposal.

13. The site falls within the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Zone of Influence for one or more of the European designated sites. If the circumstances leading to the grant of planning permission had been present, I would have considered the implications further, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on the main issue above, I have not found it necessary to consider such matters any further as this would not alter the outcome of the appeal.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

B Pattison

INSPECTOR