



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 June 2024

By Terrence Kemmann-Lane JP DipTP FRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/24/3339714

9 Roach Vale, Eastwood, SS9 5TQ

- 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 Robin Carlile against the decision of Southend-on-Sea City Council.
 - The application Ref 23/01870/FULH, dated 29 November 2023, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2024.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side extension at 9 Roach Vale, Eastwood, SS9 5TQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/01870/FULH, dated 29 November 2023, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) No development shall be carried out other than groundworks in preparation for the extension hereby approved until details of the external materials to be used in the construction of the extension, and its visual integration into the existing building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details and shall remain in that form.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the streetscene and wider surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached, two-storey dwelling with a space on the east side which I am told was previously occupied by a single storey attached double garage. On the front of the house on the other side is a single-storey forward projection under a gabled roof, providing an entrance porch and other living accommodation. The ground floor openings, at least on the front elevation, were boarded up at the time of my visit.
4. Crouch Vale is a short cul-de-sac, around which 12 detached, two storey dwellings are situated. They are of varied appearance and style, have a mix of external materials, but achieve an harmonious whole. A characteristic is the

space at first-floor level between most of the houses, although at the head of the road there is just a single garage between Nos.12 and 14, which is also the case between Nos.6 and 8. In addition, it is worth mentioning that No.6, diagonally opposite the appeal dwelling, has a wider plot and front elevation than the other houses.

5. The starting point is planning policy. The officer's report refers to policies in the adopted Development Management Development Plan Document. Policy DM1 states that in order to reinforce local distinctiveness all development should, among other things, contribute positively to the space between buildings and their relationship to the public realm. Policy DM3(5) states that alterations and additions to a building will be expected to make a positive contribution to the character of the original building and the surrounding area through, among other things, adopting a scale that is respectful and subservient to that of the original building and surrounding area.
6. References are also made to the Council's Design and Townscape Guide (D&TG), Section 10 of which provides advice concerning Alterations and Additions to Existing Residential Buildings. At paragraph 351 of the D&TG it is acknowledged that many properties in the City have the capacity to extend to the side. However, side extensions can easily become overbearing and dominate the original property. The advice is that side extensions should be designed to appear subservient to the parent building by being set back, with the roof being integrated with the existing. There is an illustration under this paragraph by way of a photograph of an example which shows a similar relationship of the side extension to the original house as that proposed in this appeal.
7. The appellant states that the appeal property is generally run-down and out of date, and that the garage was demolished due to subsidence. His intention now is to take the opportunity to secure improvements and an extension with a replacement garage and additional accommodation above, creating a spacious family home. This 2-storey side extension would be set back behind the main front elevation of the house by 1m and have a gabled roof. The ridge of the roof of the extension would be set down 300mm below the main roof, and the whole extension would extend to within 1m of the curtilage boundary with No.11. That neighbour is set off the common boundary so that there would be a gap of about 2.5m between the two 2-storey buildings.
8. As far as the actual extension and its relationship with the host property is concerned, the proposal follows the design guidance: as I have mentioned above, the proposed set-back from the frontage and the lower ridgeline and the matching proportions and design of windows at first floor level reflect the illustration in the D&TG, albeit that the example used is a house with much more varied detailing that lends itself to visual integration. I will return to this topic shortly, but my conclusion here is that the appeal proposal appears subservient, and successfully integrates with the existing house through a set back and a lower ridge line, and the use of the same roof pitch and materials.
9. Policy DM1 refers to, among other things, that development should contribute positively to the space between buildings and their relationship to the public realm. This is commented on in the officer's report by noting that the street scene in the vicinity of the site is visually open and characterised by detached dwellings, with wide single storey garages set well back from the narrow

highway, and open frontages. It is also said that these ancillary features and the rhythmic spaces above them give a sense of spaciousness and make a positive contribution to the setting of this road and the local townscape.

10. This picture is not entirely accurate since there is a gap only about 2m wide between Nos. 5 and 7 Roach Vale, and just a single garage between Nos.12 and 14 and Nos.6 and 8. In addition, I do not agree that the spaces are rhythmic because apart from the narrower spaces that I have mentioned, there are also wide spaces, such as the very open area opposite the site between Nos.4 and 6 and the loose spatial arrangement of Nos.10 and 12.
11. Finally, there is the officer's criticism of the 'rudimentary' design and lack of articulation. I agree that the proposed front elevation shown on drawing No.9RV_P007 does not immediately demonstrate a particularly pleasing façade, but this ignores the forwards projection under a tiled gable roof, and the fact that the extension would be set back from the main front elevation. The indication of the finish to walls is also not shown to advantage. The appellant's proposal is that the existing brickwork on the ground floor and forward projection, and the rather sombre dark vertical boarding at first floor level would be replaced with render which he describes as 'carefully considered to match the style and appearance of other rendered elevations of properties along Roach Vale, notably numbers 7, 11 and 14 which benefit from white or pink coloured rendered elevations'. The only reference that I can see on the application documentation to this finish is on the application form, where it is described as 'smooth render'.
12. In this connection, I note that the council has suggested conditions in the event that the appeal is allowed, one of which is that the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces shall match those used in the existing building. Clearly this does not accord with the appellant's intentions, but it would be open to me to impose it. However, I am far from convinced that the vertical boarding should be retained or included on any part of the building. It also seems to me that, as elsewhere in Roach Vale, render is combined with brickwork to good effect. If permitting the proposal, I am moved in the direction of a condition that would require the details of the external materials to be submitted to and agreed by the local planning authority. This would provide the opportunity for the appellant to re-think this aspect of the proposed development, and perhaps address the criticism of a lack of articulation in the submitted plans. Whilst such 'articulation' would not involve changing the physical relationships between elements of the development, the use of different materials could bring greater interest to the appearance of the enlarged dwelling and further integrate it into the streetscene.

Conclusions

13. In paragraph 8 above I concluded that the appeal proposal appears subservient and successfully integrates with the existing house. In paragraph 10 I made observations about the way that space between houses in Roach Vale are used in the layout. From that I conclude that the appeal proposal would not remove a space between the host dwelling and its neighbour to such an extent that it would be out of place, and appear bulky and incongruous to the totality of development in this cul-de-sac. Finally, I considered the matter of design regarding whether it is rudimentary and lacking articulation in paragraphs 11 and 12. The conclusion that I draw from this is that the proposed development

has a degree of articulation, with the forward projection under a gable, and the set-back of the extension, but that by use of a slightly wider pallet of materials, rather than all render, the appearance could be enhanced, and further integration into the streetscene could be achieved, and that this could be dealt with by a condition.

14. For these reasons I will allow the appeal, subject to conditions.

Conditions

15. The statutory condition that provides a time limit on the start of development must be imposed. In addition, the council has suggested 2 conditions in the event that the appeal is upheld. I have considered these in the light of Planning Practice Guidance. It is suggested that a condition should be imposed requiring that the external materials shall match those used in the existing building. For the reasons given in paragraphs 12 and 13, I will impose the condition I have indicated, and not that suggested by the council. The council also suggested a condition requiring that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. I agree that this is necessary for certainty and the avoidance of doubt, but this can be incorporated in the decision itself.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR