



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 June 2024

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/24/3343142

Dale Villa, Dale Road, Southfleet, DA13 9NX

- 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 Dunn against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DA/23/01436/FUL, dated 4 December 2023, was refused by notice dated 22 February 2024.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of a single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single storey side extension at Dale Villa, Dale Road, Southfleet, DA13 9NX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DA/23/01436/FUL, dated 4 December 2023 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions set out below.
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings: 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, and 09, dated 26.10.2023.
 - 3) No development shall take place above damp proof course level until full details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary matters

2. In April 2024 the Dartford Borough Council's The Dartford Plan - Dartford Borough's Local Plan to 2037 (LP) was adopted. It states at paragraph 1.5 that the LP replaces all the policies in the Core Strategy 2011 and Development Policies Plan 2017 (DPP) and the Dartford Local Plan Pre-Submission (Publication). The Council has confirmed that in relation to the appeal proposal the most relevant policies within the LP include Policies M1, M5, M6 and M10. The appeal has been determined on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property, the street scene and the Southfleet Conservation Area (SCA).

Reasons

4. The SCA is located at the northern end of Southfleet, which is a small rural village that historically developed out from St Nicolas's Church which is grade I listed. The SCA includes a diverse range of buildings predominantly built between the C14th and C19. The modest sized houses are interspersed by larger buildings such as the church and Sedley's Church of England Primary School. The school is grade II listed and comprises an extended C17th, tall single storey red brick building with a red brick porch containing a tablet and cartouche over. The school occupies a prominent position opposite the junction of Hook Green Road, Church Street and Warren Road and opposite Church House, which is similarly grade II listed. It comprises a two storey timber faced dwelling which fronts onto Church Road and dates back to the C16th.
5. Immediately to the south of the appeal site is a small terrace of grade II listed dwellings and former post office, with an C18th attached house on one side and a C19th addition to the post office on the other side. Whilst the older dwellings have plain tiled roofs, the extension to the post office has a slate roof. To the rear these buildings have a diverse range of single and two storey projections and extensions, that are separated from the appeal dwelling by outbuildings and rear gardens that are enclosed by tall close boarded fences. The dwellings to the east of this row of cottages similarly have a diverse range of rear projections and extensions.
6. The scale, age, design and appearance of these listed buildings together with their use over time contributes to their significance. Some buildings are also identified in the Southfleet Conservation Area Appraisal (SCAA) as being either key buildings or of townscape value. This includes the appeal dwelling, which comprises a deep Victorian Villa, with a steeply pitched roof with front and rear facing gables.
7. Overall the SCA includes a mixed range and age of buildings which typically have steeply pitched plain tiled roofs and a combination of brick, painted brick, rendered, tile hung, timber clad and timber framed walls. They include a diverse range of flat and pitched roof extensions and outbuildings. This together with the narrow lanes, flanked by banks, hedges and walls, the strong sense of enclosure and views through to the open countryside all contribute to the domestic scale and rural character, appearance and significance of the SCA.
8. The appeal dwelling occupies a generous sized plot with gardens on either side, as well as to the rear. To the rear of the dwelling is a one and half storey projection which stretches across half the width of the house and has a pitched roof which matches that of the main dwelling. To the side of this projection is a single storey flat roofed infill extension with a roof lantern feature and rendered walls to match the host dwelling. This extension projects a short distance out from the side elevation of the host dwelling. There is also a modern single storey wrap around extension with a shallow mono-pitched roof and Cedar clad walls. It projects around the existing one and half storey rear projection and the rear wall of the single storey infill extension.

9. When viewed from the southern side garden, the adjacent street scene and from the junction of Dale Road and Church Street the small protrusion of the rear infill extension into the garden, along with the lantern roof and the rear of the adjacent taller mono-pitched roof appear awkward, mis-matched and cluttered. They have a degrading impact and detract from the appearance of the host dwelling, when viewed from the garden and the street scene. This cluttered appearance is exacerbated by the use of both rendered and Cedral clad walls alongside each other and a large shed within the rear garden environment.
10. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LB&CA Act), requires that when assessing proposals for new development which affect the setting of a listed building, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving its setting. Section 72 of the LB&CA Act 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.
11. Collectively paragraphs 205, 208 and 209 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), state that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to its conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial or less than substantial harm to its significance. Any harm to a heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification, whilst opportunities for new development in conservation areas should be sought. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Any harm to a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account when determining applications. LP Policies M1, M5 and M6 are consistent with this.
12. Collectively, LP policies M1 and M10 seek to ensure that new development responds to and reinforces positive aspects of the locality. Proposals should maintain or enhance local character and should not result in harm arising from the erosion of local character. These policies are consistent with paragraph 135 of the Framework.
13. The proposed single storey side extension would be the same height and attached to the flat roofed rear infill extension. Its flat roof would include three modest sized raised roof-lights, which would visually break up the roof line and the proposed fenestration and fascia would be simple and uncluttered. The proposed extension would have matching rendered walls and would stretch across the width of the garden area. It would be set back behind the rear building line of the original villa where, due to its simple form, it would not compete with the host dwelling and would be clearly identifiable as an extension to it.
14. The existing awkward side projection, cluttered roof forms and relationship between the existing infill and wrap around extensions would be largely screened by the proposed extension. Similarly, the proposed extension would screen the rear and part of the tall side boundary fences when viewed from the garden area.

15. In views from the immediate street scene and in particular from the junction of Dale Road and Church Street, the proposed extension would be largely screened by the existing boundary fences. Where the upper part of the proposed extension could be seen it would declutter the roofscape and frame views of the adjacent side elevation of the host dwelling. It would also blend in readily with the surrounding rear garden environment which, as stated above, is characterised by a diverse range and size of rear projections, extensions and outbuildings.
16. For these reasons the proposed extension would respect the host dwelling. It would preserve the character and appearance of the SCA and the settings of the nearby listed buildings, having a neutral impact on their significance. Having reached this conclusion there is no need to consider the proposal against any public benefits.
17. The appellant has referred to the floor level of the extension and the need for it to match that of the existing dwelling. The personal reasons for this are justifiable. Also, if the height of the extension was reduced it would add to rather than screen the existing roof clutter.
18. Finally, the council has suggested the imposition of a condition relating to the adherence to the submitted drawings, which is necessary in the interests of certainty. The council has also suggested the imposition of a condition which requires the external surfaces of the extension to match those of the existing dwelling. However, some of the walls of the dwelling are rendered and some are Cedar Clad. Also, drawing No. 08 clearly states that the proposed roof would comprise grey fibreglass and the window would be grey powder coated aluminium, although precise colours are not stated. No materials or colours are stated in relation to the fascia, gutters and downpipes. Given the sensitive location of the extension the finishes and colour/tone of the external materials would be important in ensuring that the proposed extension would respect the host building and its setting. Neither the council or the appellant have raised any objections to the suggested more precise materials condition.
19. I conclude that the proposed extension would respect and blend in readily with the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. It would preserve the character and appearance of the SCA, the setting of nearby listed buildings and would not detract from their significance. Accordingly, the proposal would comply with LP Policies M1, M5, M6 & M10 and sections 12 & 15 of the Framework.

Other matters

20. The concerns raised relating to the location of a local sewer is a matter for Southern Water Services Limited. National Gas Transmission plc and the National Grid have confirmed that the proposal does not affect any of their apparatus. The concerns raised relating to the location of a local sewer is a matter for Southern Water Services Limited. Any ownership or use disputes regarding the appeal site are a private matter. These matters fall outside the scope of this appeal.
21. Given the distance between the proposed extension and the existing dwellings to the south and west and the busy character of the rear garden environment, I am satisfied that the proposal would not have a materially adverse impact on the outlook from neighbouring dwellings.

22. Finally, having regard to the extent of on-site parking available within the grounds of the appeal property, it should be ample to meet the parking needs of the extended dwelling.

Conclusion

23. Having regard to my conclusion on the main issue and all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR