



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2024

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B1550/D/24/3343818

18 Chestnut Close, Hockley, Essex, SS5 5EJ.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Michael Nicholson against the decision of Rochford District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/00886/FUL.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing garage to form exercise room and utility area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Procedural Matters

2. The Council's decision letter describes the alterations and extension of to the existing garage as retrospective. It is clear from the evidence provided and my site visit that the development has been undertaken onsite. I shall determine the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

3. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposal on the architectural integrity of the host property and thereby the street scene and the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property, 18 Chestnut Close (No18) is a semi-detached bungalow. The street is characterised by similar styled semi-detached bungalows. However, unlike No 18 most do not have either garages or side projections and therefore in many cases access has been maintained for parking and garaging behind the properties.
5. The earlier garage extension has been altered to provide both an exercise and utility room. The development is contained within the same footprint as that previously occupied by the garage. The only significant departures from the garage are the replacement of the garage door with a window, the increase in height of the flat roof and the change in cladding to the public elevations.

6. The roof of the original garage previously sat below the eaves line of the bungalow and as a result, despite its very deep fascia, the garage structure would nevertheless have appeared subservient to the No 18. Due to the new raised roof, built into the pitched roof, it not only detracts from the form of the roof of No 18 but makes the building more prominent in the street scene and thereby less visually subservient.
7. The red cedar cladding in this case, while attractive in its own right, serves in this case to give the development prominence in the street scene. Of further concern is the introduction of yet another form and colour of cladding to the top of the east flank wall above the original render line. This is a poor piece of design that has also been very poorly executed. The choice of cladding and detailing in this case adds to the overall prominence of garage as altered and extended.
8. On balance, I conclude in respect of the main issue that the proposed development as designed and executed has caused significant harm to the architectural integrity of the host property and thereby the street scene as well as the character and appearance of the area. To allow the development would be contrary to the objectives of Policy DM1 of Rochford District Council's Local Development Framework-Development Management Plan (Adopted 16 December 2014), Council's Supplementary Planning Document *2-Housing Design* (Adopted January 2007) and the National Planning Policy Framework as they, amongst other things, relate to the quality of development and seek to promote the character of the locality.

Other Matters

9. I agree with the appellant that contrasting contemporary architectural design of an extension or alteration can often enhance and complement not only a host building but the character and appearance of its setting.
10. However, in this case due to the small scale of development the introduction of such a strong contrasting finish as red cedar vertical boarding only serves to increase the prominence of the extension to the detriment of the form and design of No 18. Further, the introduction of a contrasting section of cladding to the flank wall at high level denudes the quality of the overall design as well as the appearance of the finished composition.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR