
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 October 2024

by A Knight BA PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/24/3341687

100 Lenthall Avenue, Thurrock, Grays RM17 5AL

- 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 Marious Vila against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01388/HHA.
The development proposed is rear outbuilding to be used as home office, storage, and gym.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have omitted 'retention of' from the description above, as that is not a form of development. I observed during my site visit that the development has commenced.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the building on the character and appearance of the appeal site and the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site includes a semidetached house (the main house) with side and rear amenity areas. The site is on the corner of Lenthall Avenue and Lucas Road; the latter comprises simple houses laid out in a traditional suburban manner, with a clearly defined front building line. The appeal development is an outbuilding occupying much of the width of the site at its rearmost part, and which is clearly visible from the public highway outside.
5. The overall footprint of the outbuilding is nearly as great as that of the main house, and it is much wider. As a result, it appears disproportionately large in comparison, making it both incongruous and visually dominant in the context of the appeal site. This is exacerbated by the short distance between the outbuilding and the main house. That the site retains some 138m² of amenity space does not alter or mitigate the above.
6. The outbuilding protrudes significantly beyond the front building line on Lucas Road and is far closer to the nearest house on that street than to the main house. As a result, it has an intrusive presence in Lucas Road, disruptive to the established pattern of development. Though the boundary fence and gazebo at the appeal site already breach the Lucas Road building line, the

former is a common exception to building lines and the latter is set a significant distance away from the houses on Lucas Road. The outbuilding, in contrast, is neither and has a significantly greater effect in that regard.

7. The application form states that the walls of the outbuilding will comprise blocks with a rendered finish, whilst the appeal statement informs me the materials and finishes of the appeal development match those in the existing property. Contrary to this, I found the outbuilding walls to comprise timber sheets in the main, inconsistent in colour and joined in a simple manner. This gives the outbuilding an ad-hoc, untidy look which is significantly detrimental to the appearance of the area. I have no evidence that the appellant intends to alter the appearance of the building or, given the closeness of the outbuilding to the boundaries, that it would be possible to do so.
8. Whilst domestic outbuildings are common in the area, I have no evidence that any have impacts comparable to the appeal development. The appellant contends that the development incorporates high levels of energy efficiency. As very little evidence has been supplied to support this assertion and I saw none for myself when I visited the site, I attribute very little weight to this point. In principle, a domestic outbuilding may be acceptable at the appeal site. The site is not in a conservation area. The existing development provides valuable domestic space and facilities for the appellant. None of this, however, justifies the harm described above.
9. The appeal development harms the character and appearance of the appeal site and the local area and, as such, conflicts with Policies CSTP22, PMD1 and PMD2 of the Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development 2015, which require high quality design that respects surrounding character and appearance. It also conflicts with the advice regarding appropriate design for outbuildings in the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2017, and in the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

10. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

A Knight

INSPECTOR