
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/W/24/3345049

2 Lockyer Road, Purfleet-on-Thames, Thurrock RM19 1RU

- 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 Tomas Pohnetal against the decision of Thurrock Council.
 - The application reference is 24/00258/FUL.
 - The proposed development is for a two-storey semi-detached residential dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the impact of the development on a) the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area; b) parking provision and highway safety; and c) the risk of flooding.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site consists of a two-storey, semi-detached house on the junction between Lockyer Road and London Road. The surrounding neighbourhood is mixed in nature, with residential properties and commercial and industrial uses evident.
 4. The new dormer window to the rear roof slope of the host dwelling would be relatively large, with a flat roof and a wide expanse of glazing. I observed that there are few other dormer elements apparent to houses in the vicinity, and as such any additional features would need to be designed with particular sensitivity to ensure that they integrate with local built form.
 5. Bearing this in mind, I consider that the overall size of the dormer, its boxy shape and proximity to the ridge line above and eaves level below, would appear dominant and be harmful to the character of the dwelling and surrounds. Moreover, the misalignment of the fenestration with the openings below, and the relatively large expanse of glazing at roof level that would be significantly larger than other first floor windows elsewhere on the rear elevation, would result in a discordant and top-heavy appearance.
 6. I note that the Council does not appear to object to the attached dwelling and rear extension, and I have no reason to disagree.
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7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the dwelling and surrounding area. It would conflict with Policies CSTP22 and PMD2 of the Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development Document 2015 (CS), and the Thurrock Design Guide, Residential Alterations & Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2017). Together these require schemes to respond to and respect the character of the area, to provide a high quality of design, and ensure the form and scale of extensions is appropriate to the original dwelling and the surrounding development pattern. It would also be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Parking provision and highway safety

8. The scheme proposes no parking spaces for the development. The Council's Parking Standards indicate a minimum parking provision of 1.5 to 2 spaces for dwellings of 2-3 bedrooms. This is not possible on the site and the scheme would therefore be contrary to requirements; I have not been provided with any parking surveys to indicate that a shortfall could be justified.
9. At my site visit I saw that London Road is a heavily-trafficked arterial route. Whilst there are no parking restrictions on the highway, for example in the form of permits, time limits or a pay and display regime, parking on the kerbside would be highly undesirable due to its busy nature with frequent passing of large heavy goods vehicles.
10. Lockyer Road is a quieter residential thoroughfare. At the time of my visit, on a Thursday morning, there was limited availability for on-street parking close to the appeal site; whilst I accept this is only a snap shot in time, it is an indication that it is difficult to achieve at certain times of day. Although once again there are no restrictions, dropped kerbs limit opportunities for on-street parking.
11. Lockyer Road is narrow, and as such any increased on-street parking in the immediate proximity to the site would be likely to result in the road becoming difficult to navigate, which would cause an obstruction for users. Moreover, the restricted highway already encourages vehicles to park on the pavement to allow the free-flow of traffic. This causes a problem for pedestrians who may have to walk in the road; an increase in parking would aggravate this hazard.
12. If the development were permitted any future residents of the proposed development would be placed in the unsatisfactory position of having to park on street in an area of parking stress, with the harmful impacts on safety this would entail, including reduced visibility for pedestrians and congestion. Moreover, the lack of on-site parking could result in occupants having to park some distance from the dwelling, thus leading to a temptation to park inconsiderately closer to the site. It would also result in additional vehicular movements in the area as they search for vacant spaces, and the situation would be aggravated particularly if the residents had visitors.
13. I appreciate the appellant's concern that the original layout to demonstrate space for a vehicle to the front of the proposal was deemed unacceptable, and that following its removal a highways objection still remained. However, the provision of the space raised matters of adverse safety conditions from London Road, whereas the lack of any provision generates different issues as I have outlined above.

14. The appellant has also indicated that alternative arrangements could be made to resolve the objection. However, as no comprehensive plans have been made available I am not clear exactly what could be achieved, or whether for instance access could be gained to the site frontage from Lockyer Road.
15. Consequently, the scheme would give rise to prejudicial conditions to highway safety, contrary to Policies PMD2, PMD8 and PMD9 of the CS. The proposal is also inconsistent with the advice in the Framework, which advocates that development should not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Flooding

16. No specific Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted to support the appeal or demonstrate that the necessary requirements in respect of safety, resistance and resilience could be satisfied. Whilst I acknowledge the appellant's suggested strategies, in the absence of more detailed information I am minded to adopt a precautionary approach, and as such I am not convinced that the development would incorporate sufficient measures in this regard.
17. I find that the proposal would increase the risk of flooding on the site and local area. This would run contrary to Policies CSTP27 and PMD15 of the CS that seek to minimise the impacts of and from all forms of flood risk, and with the guidance in the Framework which has similar aims.

Conclusion

18. Based on the arguments above and all other factors, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR