



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2024

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1515/W/24/3346193

55 Crown Street, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4BD

- 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 Tracey Horner against the decision of Brentwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01382/FUL.
 - The development proposed is demolish existing two storey toilets to rear, and construction of new two storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the description referred to on the decision notice and the appeal form in the banner header above, as it more accurately describes the development proposed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an attractive brick building located within the centre of Brentwood. The attached property at 57 Crown Street is rendered to its rear elevation, with both buildings having modest two storey flat roofed rear extensions. There is considerable variation in the design, height and materials of buildings in the surrounding area, but the appeal property makes a positive visual contribution to the locality in which it is found.
5. Because of its width, depth and its flat roof, the proposed development would appear as a bulky addition to the rear of the property. Its impact would be considerably heightened because of the use of weatherboarding, which would contrast with the brickwork of the building to which the proposed extension would be attached. Whereas the existing extension is a modest brick-built addition which is inconspicuous in its impact, the proposal would be a visually stark and jarring addition. It would as a result cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property.
6. The rear of the property is not overly prominent in public views, but the proposal would be visible in some views from Primrose Hill and from nearby properties. In any event, an absence of public visibility would not in itself

justify the permitting of an extension which would not be visually sensitive to its host property and consequently to the surrounding area. The proposal would also therefore cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.

7. I acknowledge that weatherboarding of the same colour proposed is present very close to the appeal site at 1 Primrose Hill. However, that has not been used in contrast to red brickwork and its contrast with the white render of the property is less harsh. Its relationship to the rear of the property on which it sits is also different in that the extension obscures the majority of the rear elevation. The contrast in the appeal case would be with the brickwork, much of which would remain visible. The fence to No 1, although too finished in grey, is a smaller structure not comparable in its impact to the appeal proposal.
8. My attention has also been drawn to other examples of weatherboarding in the area, but the limited number of examples provided does not suggest that this is a frequently used material and what has been identified is well dispersed over a relatively broad area. The Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide 2019 does make provision for contemporary extensions and materials, however in this instance there would be harm resulting from what is proposed for the reasons that I have set out.
9. In conclusion, the proposal would fail to accord with Policy BE14 of the Brentwood Local Plan 2022 (LP) where it requires proposals to respond positively and sympathetically to their context.

Other Considerations

10. The extension is required to improve toilet facilities at the property. The proposed toilets are referred to as being accessible, but the ground floor toilet space is of an awkward layout and the first floor appears accessible by stairs only. It is not therefore clear that the toilets would be accessible to all, and by the appellant's own admission they would not comply with Building Regulations specifications. Nonetheless, they would be an improvement on the current provision and the proposed development would address the poor condition of the existing extension, improving on the current construction and making a marginally more efficient use of the land.
11. There may be some economic and social benefits associated with the improved toilet provision in terms of making the building more comfortable for current users and more attractive to potential users, but it was in use at the time of my visit and it has not been suggested that the viability of its future use would be in jeopardy if the appeal was not successful. Furthermore, I am not persuaded that the appeal proposal and in particular its intended use of external facing materials is the only way in which an improved toilet provision could be achieved. Collectively therefore, these considerations carry moderate weight in favour of the proposed development.

Planning Balance & Conclusion

12. The proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the area. Consequently, it would fail to accord with Policy BE14 of the LP and with the development plan taken as a whole. Balanced against this it would provide the benefits I have outlined which

collectively offer moderate weight in its favour. Those benefits do not outweigh the harm that would result and the conflict with the development plan.

13. In conclusion therefore, I find that the other considerations in this case do not indicate that a determination should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Graham Wraight

INSPECTOR