



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2025

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/D/24/3354988

70 Freegrounds Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 0JA

- 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 Mrs L Grant against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is H/24/97589.
 - The development proposed is described as 8m rear extension with roof alterations and summer house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the proposed summer house. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the proposed 8m rear extension with roof alterations and planning permission is granted for an 8m rear extension with roof alterations at 70 Freegrounds Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 0JA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref H/24/97589 and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the rear extension and roof alterations hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, in-so-far as they relate to the proposed rear extension and roof alterations hereby permitted: Drawing Nos: 100, 101 and 102.

Main Issues

2. The first main issue is the effect of the proposed extension and roof alterations on the character and appearance of the host property and the street scene. The second main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the living conditions of the occupiers of 68 & 72 Freegrounds Road (No.68 & No.72). The third main issue is the effect of the proposed summer house on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The easterly end of Freegrounds Road is primarily characterised by similarly designed bungalows with modest, fully hipped roofs and modest sized front projections with hipped roofs. Many of the dwellings have had extensions and

additions including front and/or rear dormers and a diverse range of rear additions, including some full height extensions. These bungalows are interspersed by occasional dormer bungalows and chalet style dwellings with deeper and/or gable roofs. Further to the west along Freegrounds Road the range of dwellings becomes more diverse and includes a significant proportion of chalet and two storey dwellings.

4. This together with the gaps between dwellings, spacious plots and soft planting within the front and rear gardens contributes to the spacious and suburban character and appearance of the locality.
5. The appeal dwelling is situated at the easterly end of the road and is located within a row of seven uniformly designed and sited bungalows. The end dwelling at No.64 has a full height rear extension with a projecting box dormer within the rear roof-slope. No. 68 has box dormers to the front and rear which project up to the ridge line and a 8 metres deep full height rear extension was approved at the rear of No.66 in 2023. Other dwellings, including the appeal dwelling have flat roofed rear extensions.
6. To the rear the dwellings have pitched roof garages which project into the rear gardens and are accessed by driveways to the sides of the dwellings. There are also a number of outbuildings of various sizes. The depth of the rear gardens varies considerably and the appeal property benefits from one of the deeper gardens. The gardens back onto Cortina Way from which the roofs of most of the bungalows can be seen over the close boarded rear boundary fences and between the soft planting within the rear gardens.
7. It is noted that there is an extant planning permission for a six metre deep rear extension to the appeal dwelling and that the appeal proposal would extend the length of the approved extension by two metres. Given their similarities, this is a material consideration in the determination of this appeal.
8. Amongst other things policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 (LP), states that proposals should be well integrated with existing development in terms of mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting. Proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of existing residents, or involve the loss of soft landscape features that are important to the character of the area.
9. The Eastleigh Borough Council Quality Places - Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (SPD), advises that rooflines form an important element of the street and can have a harmful effect if not carefully designed and constructed. They should complement surrounding development; roof design should be carefully considered; and external materials should match the existing. The SPD also advises that in relation to ancillary buildings, blank walls in the public realm should be avoided as they are visually unappealing due to their large bland elevations. Where found necessary their impact should be mitigated through the use of planting, or design detailing.
10. The Council's Character Area Appraisals - Hedge End, West End and Botley – Supplementary Planning Document (HESPD) provides guidance for maintaining the character of the area. It advises that plot widths and a continuity of building lines should be maintained, along with a uniformity in building heights within each street.

Character and appearance - proposed extension

11. Whilst the rear extension would be materially deeper than the approved extension, it would not look out of place within this rear garden environment or in views from Cortina Way, where the existing building lines and roof heights would be retained. The rear building lines already vary considerably and the detached garages add to the depth of built development within the rear garden environment. The proposed resultant dwelling would be comparable in depth to the recently approved extension at No.66 and comparable in design to the extension at No.64.
12. As with the extension at No.66 the proposal would materially increase the size of the original dwelling. Notwithstanding this, it would respect and relate sympathetically to the proportions, character and appearance of the host dwelling and its setting. Also, the demolition of the existing garage would create additional space around the dwelling. As indicated by the council, having regard to the size of the existing rear garden the proposal would not result in the over-development of the site.
13. Accordingly, subject to the use of matching materials and adherence to the submitted plans, the proposed rear extension and roof alterations would respect and blend in readily with the host dwelling and the surrounding area. As suggested by the council these are things that could be secured through the imposition of conditions.
14. For these reasons I conclude on the first main issue that the proposed rear extension and roof alterations would respect the established pattern of development along Freegrounds Road. Accordingly, in this respect the proposal would comply with LP Policy DM1 and the SPD.

Living conditions

15. The resultant dwelling would be located to the southwest and would project approximately 13 metres beyond the rear wall of the adjacent dwelling at No.74. However, the roof of the proposed dwelling would be fully hipped and there would be a gap of some four metres between the two dwellings. The existing garage which projects up to the party boundary and extends further in to the rear garden environment would be removed as part of the proposal. This would reduce the impact of the proposal. Also, the dwelling at No.74 would continue to benefit from a favourable south-westerly aspect into the property's deep rear garden.
16. The proposed extension would be sited to the southeast and would project beyond the rear building line of the dwelling at No. 68 by approximately five metres. The proposed roof would be fully hipped and there would be a good sized gap between the two dwellings.
17. For these reasons I conclude on the second main issue that the proposal would not have a materially harmful impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of No.68 and No.72 due to visual impact. Accordingly, the proposal would comply with LP Policy DM1 and the SPD.

Character and appearance – proposed summer house

18. When the appeal application was submitted there was a mature evergreen hedge along the rear boundary, which is referred to by the appellant and council. At the time of the appeal site visit there was no vegetation where the proposed summerhouse would be sited.
19. The proposed summer house would be located at the rear end of the garden, close to the rear and side boundaries of the property, leaving no room for soft landscaping to soften its appearance within the rear garden environment and the street scene.

Although its flat roof would minimise the height of the proposed summer house, it would appear utilitarian and visually hard when viewed from Cortina Way.

20. I acknowledge that the rear wall of the proposed summer house would be partially screened by the tall rear boundary fence. However, the boundary fence is similarly utilitarian in appearance and together with the proposed summer house it would present an unattractive dead frontage to Cortina Road. With regard to the recently constructed outbuilding to the ear of No.66, it is set in from the rear boundary and is materially narrower than the proposed summer house. As a result, it does not present such a hard wall of development as the proposed summer house.
21. For these reasons the proposed summer house would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This harm would outweigh the benefits for the appellant and their family that would result from the provision of a summer house and is not something that could be adequately dealt with by condition.
22. Finally, I have taken into consideration that a lower building in this location, or a building of the same height but set in two metres from the rear boundary would fall within current permitted development rights tolerances. However, their impact on the street scene would be noticeably less than the appeal proposal. As stated in paragraphs 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework), developments should add to the overall quality of the area. They should be visually attractive as-a-result of good architecture, layout and appropriate landscaping and be sympathetic to local character.
23. I conclude on the third main issue that the proposed summer house would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would conflict with LP Policy DM1, the SPD and paragraph 135 of the Framework.

Conclusion

24. In view of my conclusions on the three main issues I have considered the possibility of issuing a split decision. As the rear extension and proposed summer house are physically and functionally separate a split decision would be both possible and appropriate. Accordingly, the appeal is allowed in so far as it relates to the proposed rear extension and roof alterations and is dismissed in relation to the proposed summer house.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR