



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 March 2025

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/25/3359095

1 St. Vincent's Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 7PP

- 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 & Mrs Brian & Janet Wallis against the decision of Southend-on-Sea City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01279/FULH.
 - The development proposed is single storey side and rear wrap around extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. After the refusal of the application a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. Since the appeal was lodged, further revisions to that document were made. Having reviewed the changes, I am satisfied that they do not affect the substantive matters of the appeal, and that proceeding without seeking further comments from the parties would not be prejudicial to their cases.
3. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but as the parties have not provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property, the terrace of which it forms part and the wider Milton Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a mid-terrace late nineteenth century house located within the Milton Conservation Area. The published Milton Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) identifies the special interest of the area as having a strong late-Victorian and early-Edwardian architectural quality, and the eclectic mix of architectural styles which illustrate the transition in this period of architecture. It notes that the Park and Vincent Estates, which includes St Vincent's Road, stand out in that they embody within a small area a well preserved cross section of Southend's typical architecture in its time of early growth. The CAA identifies the appeal property and

the buildings within the terrace of which it forms part as making a positive contribution to the character of the area.

6. Within this context, it is evident that the rear elevations of dwellings within the vicinity are more altered than the front. The appeal property and neighbouring buildings have single-storey rear extensions which vary in size, form, materials, and position on the building to which they relate. This includes the appeal property, which has a relatively modest rear extension attached to the end of its two-storey 'outrigger'. As noted by the appellants', this and other nearby extensions are functional and devoid of any architectural interest, such that they do not make a positive contribution to the conservation area.
7. Despite the variety of extensions locally, none appear to be of the size and scale proposed. Although it may not project significantly beyond the neighbouring rear extensions, the proposed depth and width would be excessive in relation to the proportions of the host house. The existing dwelling has a vertical emphasis that would be undermined by an addition of the proposed depth and width, beyond the outrigger; despite the lower height of the extension and the height of the main house, I do not share the view that this would be subordinate in scale. Given its proposed footprint, it would not be neutral in its impact on the property and terrace.
8. I accept that good design does not always need strict adherence to traditional forms. However, the depth and wrap-around design of the largely flat-roofed addition would not appear integrated with the architectural style of the host house, and would create an awkward mismatch. Whilst I understand the site constraints and purpose of the sloping glazed roof, it would appear as an incongruous and unbalanced feature given the form of the house. Moreover, the width of the bifold doors in the rear elevation would create an awkward and visually jarring 'pinchpoint' with the glazed roof. This would conflict with Policy DM1 of the Southend on Sea Development Management Document 2015 (DMD) which requires development to respect the character of the site, its local context and surroundings in terms such as architectural approach, size, scale, form, massing and proportions; with detailed design features giving appropriate weight to the preservation of a heritage asset.
9. I accept that some details of concern to the Council could be the subject of planning conditions, but this would not address the integral issues of size and design outlined above.
10. The appellants have drawn attention to West House Residential Home, and other properties in the vicinity. Limited information has been supplied of these buildings, although the CAA suggests the wings at West House are pre-1920. Nonetheless, West House is a materially different detached building in terms of scale and design. For other examples cited, it is not known if they pre-date the designation of the conservation area, or what policies the developments were assessed against. As St. Vincent's Road/Avenue Road are curved, applying straight building lines¹ does not show the depths of extensions relative to their host houses. As represented, they suggest that the proposal would be much deeper and wider than other extensions in the terrace, thereby offering little support to the appeal.
11. There is a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in exercising

¹ As shown at paragraph 3.34 of the appeal statement

planning functions. The proposal would not be seen in the public domain of the conservation area, and its visual impact would be confined to the rear gardens of the appeal site and neighbouring properties. The front elevations and streetscape are the aspects that contribute most significantly to the area's historic character and townscape value, but the quality of the individual buildings contributes to the quality of the wider conservation area. The rear elevation of the property may not be as sensitive as the front, but the proposal would adversely alter the character and appearance of the dwelling, and in so doing, it would undermine its contribution to the terrace of which it forms part and the wider conservation area. This would be detrimental to the significance of the heritage asset.

12. However, whilst I agree with the Council's assessment that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area as a designated heritage asset, I do not share the view that this level of harm would be significant. Nevertheless, paragraph 212 of the Framework requires that, when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of the level of harm. When less than substantial harm would result, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
13. Whilst maintaining and improving the housing stock in a conservation area may be a public benefit, the adverse scale and design of the proposal would not be regarded as beneficial. The associated renovations include the replacement of UPVC elements at the rear of the property, rectifying the substandard construction of an existing extension, and installing modern insulation to improve thermal efficiency, but these are not evidently dependent on an extension of the size and design proposed. As such, the harm would not be outweighed by public benefits.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the dwelling and the terrace of which it forms part, and would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Milton Conservation Area. The benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the identified harm. This would conflict with the Framework, DMD Policy DM5, as supported by the Milton CAA, which seeks to avoid development that does not conserve and enhance historic and architectural character, setting and townscape value; and with DMD Policies DM1 and DM3, as supported by the Council's Design and Townscape Guide, which together seek development that adds to the overall quality of the area and makes a positive contribution to the character of the original building and the surrounding area. It would also conflict with the Core Strategy Policies KP2 and CP4, to respect, conserve, enhance, and safeguard, the historic environment.
15. Whilst I acknowledge that the appellants consider that the Council failed to provide a proper assessment of the significance of the heritage asset and the harm caused by the proposal, for the reasons outlined above I find its decision to be justified.
16. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR