
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2025

by **C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/25/3368440

55 First Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 8HP

- 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 Lee Catling against the decision of Southend-on-Sea City Council.
 - The application Ref. is 25/00034/FULH.
 - The development proposed is for a revised drop kerb and a two-storey front replacement extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a revised drop kerb and a two-storey front replacement extension at 55 First Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 8HP in accordance with the terms of the application Ref. 25/00034/FULH, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 3487/05/45 00.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be in accordance with those stated in the application particulars.
 - 4) The access and driveway shall not be brought into use until a scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
 - 5) The approved hard landscaping scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved and maintained thereafter. All planting comprised in the soft landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the completion of the development, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on a) the character and appearance of the street scene; and b) biodiversity.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two-storey, detached house on the north side of First Avenue. This is a residential street that comprises buildings of broadly analogous scale, albeit with differing design, extremal materials and detailing.
4. At my visit I saw that myriad hardscaped frontages are evident in the vicinity, creating off-street parking spaces for the houses along both sides of First Avenue; the proposal would create a similar arrangement with vehicular access and hardstanding to the front of the appeal site. Therefore, whilst the loss of the existing low level brick wall, lawn, section of highway verge and hedge are regrettable, the alteration to the frontage is not significant taking into account the local context.
5. The appeal scheme would be enhanced subject to a landscaping condition to ensure provision of appropriate planting, which can be formed in the borders shown on the block plan to either side of the parking area. The considerable variety in the appearance of frontages in the vicinity ensures that the development would then assimilate without causing undue harm to the visual amenity of the surrounds.
6. The Council does not object to the two-storey replacement front extension, and I have no reason to disagree.
7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the street scene. It would meet with Policy CP4 of the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy December 2007 (CS), Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Council's Development Management Document 2015 (DMD), the National Design Guide 2021 and the Design and Townscape Guide 2009 (DTG), which collectively seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be consistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Biodiversity

8. The existing highway verge and hedge would be unlikely to provide a valuable habitat for wildlife, and I have no robust evidence, for example from a qualified ecologist, that their loss would be harmful to biodiversity.
9. I am satisfied that a condition requiring new planting would nullify any concerns in this respect. The proposal would be in accordance with Policies KP2 and CP4 of the CS, Policies DM1 and DM3 of the DMD and the DTG that seek opportunities to improve and maintain habitats in the Borough. It would also be consistent with the Framework, which states that planning decisions should enhance the natural and local environment.

Conditions

10. I have considered the imposition of conditions in light of advice in Planning Policy Guidance and the Framework. In addition to the standard implementation condition, the approved plans are listed for certainty. A condition requiring external materials in accordance with the details submitted would provide for a satisfactory appearance. A condition requiring the completion of the landscaping scheme would

ensure the Council has control over the materials used for the driveway and the height and variety of hedgerow planting. to ensure that the proposal integrates with the site and surrounding area and provides for biodiversity.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above and all other matters advanced, the appeal succeeds.

C Hall

INSPECTOR