



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

By Terrence Kemmann-Lane JP DipTP FRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A1530/D/25/3373147

35 Mersea Avenue, West Mersea, CO5 8JL

- 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 Mark Farthing against the decision of Colchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 250918.
 - The development proposed is a 2 storey side extension to provide additional bedrooms at first floor level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extension on the appearance and character of the existing dwelling and on the streetscene.

Reasons

3. The site contains a semi-detached house situated on the south side of Mersea Avenue within a residential area. The appeal dwelling and its attached neighbour share a gable roof, with the ridge at the central point of the pair at right-angles to the road. The gable is set slightly forward with each house having bay windows at first floor, under the overhang, and at ground level a central forward projection with windows reflecting the position of the upper bays, the whole being a symmetrical composition. The appeal proposal is to add a first floor side extension that would sit under a separate gabled roof, with the front elevation aligning with the existing main front wall.
4. The ridge would be lower than the existing ridge of the pair and the materials would match the present houses, seeking to give a degree of subordination of the extension to the existing dwelling and its neighbour, but these facts do not respond to the basic failure of the proposed extension to relate well with the present building. The proposal is at complete variance with the existing form and relationship of the existing pair. Apart from the basic incompatibility of the scheme with the existing form of the pair of dwellings, the junction of the extension roof with the existing roof is very awkward and visually clumsy, and the columns along the side, at ground floor level, that would support the outer part of the extension at first floor, are visually weak.

5. There are varying designs of single-storey and two-storey semi-detached and detached dwellings in the area, but the objection is not about variety of forms, but about poor design. Whilst the footprint would not be greatly enlarged and the gross internal floorspace would be increased by just 12%, these facts do not address the point of criticism. Nor does that fact that there would be no adverse impact on the living conditions at No.33 and that adequate separation with that property would remain. The appellant suggests that the assessment should consider the relationship of the proposal to the building as a single visual entity – ignoring that it is semi-detached, but that would be ignoring a significant factor making the proposal unacceptable in visual terms; the incongruity of the proposal with the design and form of the pair.
6. The lime trees, and the grass verge are important factors in the attractive appearance of Mersea Avenue. It is true that when the trees are in leaf, the degree to which the No.35 can be seen is reduced, but when the trees are bare, which is a significant part of the year, they do little to obscure the house from view. In any event, poor design should not be allowed because it is largely hidden. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that high quality and beautiful buildings and places are both fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It recognises the importance of good design, stating that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and requires planning decisions to ensure development is visually attractive as a result of good architecture, and sympathetic to local character (paragraph 131).
7. I have taken account of all other matters raised, but they do not amount to a justification for the proposal. The decision on the appeal comes down to the fact that the proposed extension would have a harmful effect on the appearance and character of the existing dwelling and its attached neighbour, and in turn this would be damaging to the immediate streetscene. This would be contrary to Local Plan Policies SP7, DM15 and DM13 and to the policies on good design in the NPPF. For these reasons the appeal will be dismissed.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR