



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 October 2016

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 24 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/16/3154729
25 Preston Avenue, Faversham ME13 8NH

- 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 Mark Foster against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/503340/FULL, dated 18 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Preston Avenue is a residential street characterised by a mix of single storey and two-storey detached and semi-detached properties of different architectural styles and plot sizes. Whilst there is no general uniformity to the appearance of the area the mix in heights and scale of properties give the street scene a sense of openness at first floor level. These interspersed gaps are an important element of the character of this part of the street scape which differs to that of the terraces to the north.
 4. The extension would be erected above the existing garage and would be built along the common side boundary of the adjoining property, No.27 Preston Avenue. Thus the development would conflict with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Designing an Extension – A Guide for Householders', which states that a 2m gap is normally required between a first floor extension and the side boundary. The purpose of this guidance is to preserve a sense of openness in areas comprising detached and semi-detached housing; and to avoid terracing or visual linking. This is a valid objective to which I have had regard, notwithstanding that a gap of less than 2m has been found to suffice in some instances.
 5. In the case before me, the proposed side extension would be a subservient addition with a lower ridge height than the host dwelling. It would maintain the existing eaves line and detailing of the original roof and would match the materials of the appeal property itself. However, the first floor element, by
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virtue of its proximity to the side elevation of No.27, would erode the gap between the appeal property and its neighbour and have a visually enclosing effect. This would reduce the perception of space and openness between these two properties and would appear at odds with the character and appearance of the street scene above ground floor level.

6. The Council is concerned that if the adjacent property, No.27, is also extended to the side above its existing single storey side projection there would be very limited visual gap between the properties. Whilst it is conceivable such a proposal could occur I have no evidence before me that would indicate it would, or that other properties in the street would be extended above ground floor to the side. Nevertheless, I consider that the proposal before me would itself cause a negative terracing effect.
7. My attention has been drawn to a first floor side extension that has been constructed at No.26. However, I observed that this extension has been stepped in from the side boundary and, as such, this development is not directly comparable to the appeal proposal.
8. My attention has also been drawn to another appeal decision at Peach House, 109 Ashford Road (ref 14/500150) relating to a first floor extension over an existing garage. In this case the extension would have an off-set from the side common boundary. The circumstances clearly differ to that of this proposal, therefore I can only afford this appeal decision very limited weight. In any event, the appeal before me relates to a different site and therefore can and should be considered in its own right.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would be in conflict with Policies E1, E19, and E24 of The Swale Borough Local Plan and the SPD which seek extensions and additions to buildings to be in scale in relation to the buildings surroundings and maintain or enhance the character of the street scene, amongst other matters. In reaching my decision, I have had regard to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of requiring good design and, on balance, I find that the proposed development would conflict with them.

Other Matters

10. I note the appellant wishes to provide extended bedroom accommodation for his growing family, and this would be a benefit of the development. However, the harm I have identified would be permanent and is not outweighed by the appellants' particular circumstances

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR