



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 November 2020

by **Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 16 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/20/3252090

17 Neames Forstal, Selling ME13 9PP

- 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 Edward Finucane against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/500560/FULL, dated 4 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey side extension and alterations to windows.
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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. The appeal property comprises a semi-detached house located on the eastern side of Neames Forstal which is a cul-de-sac. The houses are all of similar design and are interesting in that they were originally of a precast concrete construction known as Airey houses, which were built as part of the post war housing programme. Originally clad with an external concrete, all the houses have since been reclad with a yellow stock brickwork. In addition, a number had an attached flat roof side addition. In the main these have not been reclad, including the appeal property which has a painted finish to the front elevation and an attached glasshouse to the side.
4. The appellant points out that the footprint of the extension would be similar to the existing, including its projection forward of the main front elevation, and that the design would result in an interesting collection of built forms. A contemporary design is considered to be a wholly valid approach, as is the use of timber, and there is no particular requirement that the roof should be a traditional lean to.
5. I acknowledge that the design would indeed be very contemporary in appearance, and the exposed external structural timber would be an interesting reflection of the original form of construction. However, whilst there is no requirement for extensions to be pastiche as such, the main thrust of the

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Council's Development Plan Policies in Policies CP4, DM14 and DM16, is that extensions should generally respond positively to the style and character of the building being extended. This is reiterated in guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which in paragraph 127 refers to the need for development to be sympathetic to local character and history whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. In that context, I noted that other extensions within the road have largely complemented the predominant architectural forms and materials of the existing houses.

6. In contrast, the proposed design in my view would bear little relationship to the character of the existing house or the area, through its use of materials and built form. Although treatment of outbuildings has varied and extensions differ, the overall character of Neames Forstal is remarkably uniform. Whilst timber weatherboard cladding in isolation might be acceptable, given the nature of the outbuildings that exist, I consider its combined use with the proposed roof form, would give rise to a structure attached to No 17 which would be at odds with the simple form and character of the host building. The roof would be of a particular concern in that whilst I agree that there is no requirement for a lean to roof as such, the current proposal with a 'reverse' mono pitch would be totally at odds with the main roof form, and would appear incongruous in the streetscene. In that respect I do not agree that it would maintain the symmetry of the pair of houses. This would be accentuated by the fact that the property is angled towards the road at this point and particularly visible when viewed from the central green space that forms the end of the cul-de-sac. I consider there would be visual harm arising as a result.
7. I acknowledge that the proposed design would be sustainable, would maximise natural light and that there is policy support in Policy DM19 in those respects. However, the overall policy approach needs to be looked at together and because a proposal might comply with one particular policy, it does not mean it should not be in accordance with other relevant policies. Although the appellant considers that the higher level windows would avoid any loss of privacy to the adjoining neighbours, I noted that there is more than adequate spacing between No 17 and the adjoining property to the south, with a high hedge forming the boundary between the two. I therefore see no reason why conventional window heights would cause any privacy issues or why an alternative design could not still be built to sustainable construction principles.
8. Given the self-contained nature of the road and its separation from surrounding countryside, I agree that there would be no adverse impact to the character and beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, of which the site forms part.
9. In summary, whilst I acknowledge that the proposed design would be an interesting one, in this instance and for the reasons set out above, it would detract from the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies CP4, DM14 and DM16 of Bearing Fruits 2013: The Swale Borough Local Plan, in that it would not be appropriate to its surroundings and would not respond positively to the style and character of the building being extended.
10. Although the Framework supports innovative designs promoting high levels of sustainability, that is caveated by the need to fit in with the overall form and

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layout of the surroundings. I do not believe that would be the case here for the reasons given.

11. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR