



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 February 2019

by **P B Jarvis BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th March 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K1935/W/18/3216108 71 Valley Way, Stevenage Herts SG2 9AF.

- 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 B Walsh against the decision of Stevenage Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/00158/FP, dated 19 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 May 2018
 - The development proposed is erection of two-storey side extension to create a one bedroom end of terrace dwelling (revised scheme).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located along a main road within a modern estate. The area is characterised by rows of terraced properties, 'linked' detached dwellings and other two-storey buildings which provide continuous blocks of buildings, interspersed with regular gaps, set back from the street frontage. The wide street has grass verges and mature trees contributing to the pleasant open appearance of the area. The row within which the appeal site is located is of distinctive design comprising pairs of dwellings with wide gable fronts with low sloping simple pitched roofs, with recessed flat-roofed side additions linking the pairs.
4. Somewhat at odds with the rhythm of this building form, a large side extension has been added to the dwelling on the appeal site, apparently in place of the original flat roofed side addition. Whilst it has a full gable front, similar to those in the row and is set back from the main front elevation, it appeared to have a slightly higher ridge and similar width to the original dwelling.
5. This extension is set around 4 metres from the side boundary of the property where it adjoins an access way leading to a scout activity centre located in a woodland to the rear of the residential terrace to the north of the site. There is a wide grass verge on the northern side of the access way between it and this adjoining residential terrace. These areas create a gap between these terraces of dwellings which is characteristic of the layout of the area and which provides a pleasant vista to the rear with views through to the trees and woodland beyond and further more distant views.

6. The proposed side extension would be added to the existing extension and would fill the gap to the side boundary. I consider that this would have the effect of significantly reducing the space and openness around the dwelling and noticeably reducing the gap between the two terraces as described above. This would in turn harm the open character and built pattern of the streetscene and result in the flank elevation of the extension appearing prominently within it.
7. In addition, the proposed extension would be sited forward of the previous extension and would have an uncharacteristic hipped roof form linking its pitched roof to it. Whilst the front gable would to an extent reflect the original dwelling, it would not reflect its distinctive proportions and design and that of the wider terrace. Overall, I consider that, in terms of its design, proportions and siting, the proposed extension would appear as an incongruous addition.
8. I therefore find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would thus fail to comply with policies H7, TW8 and TW9 of the Stevenage Borough Development Plan Second Review (2004) which seek development that does not have a detrimental effect on the environment and has a quality of design which respects built form and the relationship between buildings and open space. It would also fail meet the aims of the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2009) which are to ensure that the scale, design and massing of surrounding buildings is respected.
9. There would also be conflict with policies GD1 and HOU5 of the draft Stevenage Borough Local Plan (Publication version) (2016) which seek high quality design that respects and makes a positive contribution to its location and surrounds, to which some weight can be given albeit the plan has yet to be adopted.
10. The Framework seeks generally to boost housing supply and make effective use of land in accessible locations, but this should have regard to the need to respond to local distinctiveness and character. It also recognises the contribution that small sites such as this can make to delivering and boosting the supply of homes generally. However, taking account of all relevant policies as a whole and noting that this should include achieving well-designed places sympathetic to local character, I find overall that its aims would not be met.
11. The appellant contends that the set back from the side boundary would be sufficient to ensure that there would be no visual detriment. However, I would disagree and consider that the small gap to the front and slight set back to the rear would in reality make little difference to how the building would be perceived in the streetscene. Whilst the site does comprise private land it is nevertheless appropriate to consider the impact of further built development having regard to the established form and pattern of development. Whilst the appellant refers to the potential for permitted development, I am not aware of any specific proposals in this respect and note that as a flatted development, only certain rights would be exercisable.
12. I find that the proposal would have a significantly harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area and, overall, there would be conflict with the development plan. Material considerations do not outweigh this harm. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

P Jarvis

INSPECTOR