



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 May 2020

by Alison Scott BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H0738/D/20/3246036

7 Marquis Grove, Norton TS20 1QQ

- 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 Mrs Melanie Rees against the decision of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/2053/FUL, dated 16 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is Two storey side/rear extension with single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of the development has been amended by the Council and is described as, *Erection of two storey extension to the side to include installation of flue and single storey extension to the rear (demolition of existing garage) at 7 Marquis Grove, Norton, TS20 1QQ*. I concur with the varied description as an accurate representation of the proposed development.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Located off Junction Road in the Norton area of Stockton, the appeal property is positioned at the far end of a cul-du-sac of approximately ten other two-storey houses, and dormer bungalows. Five houses on the west side of the estate road share similar design characteristics to the appeal property. The appeal site has the advantage of a wider plot to other dwellings with part of the side portion occupied by a garage combined with playroom and utility room, set back from the front building line and attached to the host dwelling. This extension would be demolished to erect the proposed two storey extension. The rear single storey extension is not in contention by the main parties and therefore I provide no consideration of this.
5. Presently, due to the small-scale nature of the garage, a fairly generous element of space is retained adjacent to the garage and the perimeter

- boundary with the immediate neighbour to the west. Due to this gap, there is a sense of spaciousness to the plot.
6. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2, February 2004 (SPG) advises that extensions should blend with the dwelling in terms of siting, design, scale and materials. It also advises that extensions should complement the main house, by, for example, being smaller or set back.
 7. Whilst it would be set back from the front building line, with only a slight reduction to the ridge line, and at approximately 9.1m wide, the proposed two storey extension would be considerably wider than the existing garage it would replace. It would not appear subordinate to the host dwelling as it would compete with the size of the original dwelling that is around 13m wide, appearing unduly bulky in relation to the host dwelling. The extension would instead, appear visually dominant and incongruous.
 8. I appreciate the appellant's argument that some of the design considerations within the SPG would align with the proposal. However, irrespective of this, the SPG should be taken as a whole and the SPG acknowledges that each proposed extension will be assessed on its relative merits.
 9. The proposed extension's scale and massing would be further emphasised by the fact that it would extend close to the side boundary with the adjacent neighbour of 6A Marquis Grove, infilling the majority of the remaining gap that presently exists. Its visual prominence would be highlighted given the fact that the appeal property is the most visible of all the houses due to its position at the very top of the cul-du-sac, thus the extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the street scene.
 10. Although the word subordinate may be absent from the planning officers planning report, nonetheless, there is a very clear explanation set out within it as to the relationship between the host dwelling and the proposed extension and the effect the development would have on it, and to the character and appearance of the street scene. I find no fault with the reasoning within the report.
 11. Despite the letters of support to the proposal, and the fact that there is some variety of house type and design within the immediate locality of the appeal property, this does not alter my view that the development would not complement the scale and proportions of the host dwelling. It would not harmonise with the host dwelling and would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the street scene.
 12. It is a difference of opinion between the appellant and the Council as to what they consider to be acceptable design in this case, however, for the reasons explained, I find in favour of the Council. The National Planning Policy Framework broadly sets out the principles to achieving well-designed places and the Council's own policy and SPG requirements more specifically sets out design aims to conform to. I have found that the proposal does not conform with the overall aims and objectives of the SPG and is in conflict with the design principles and aims of the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Local Plan January 2019, Policies SD3 and SD8 that seeks to support development that is, amongst other things, in keeping with the property and street scene in terms of style, proportion and materials.

Other Matters

13. Whilst there may be no impact from the proposal on the living conditions of local residents, this is noted. However, good design is also an intrinsic part of successful place making to which I have found harm would arise.
14. Another development within a neighbouring street has been brought to my attention by the appellant. However, I offer no comment on this particular case as the details are not before me.
15. Specific growing family needs and the problems identified by the appellant in respect of the condition of the building they seek to demolish does not lead me to a different view.
16. There has been a number of issues raised associated with the determination of the application and Council conduct. However, in the first instance, these concerns should be directed to the Local planning Authority and are not within my remit to offer comment.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out, the appeal is dismissed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR