



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2025

by **Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/24/3354932

1 Strand Close, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0EG

- 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 Lee Jameson against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20240545.
 - The development proposed is two storey rear and side extension, ground floor front and side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of proposed development from the planning application form although I note it is expressed differently on other documents. The description of development in the Council's decision notice also refers to site works involving the excavation of the garden and erection of a new retaining wall. I have taken these works into consideration within my decision.
3. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published since the planning application was determined by the Council. I have had regard to the revised Framework in reaching my decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on the: -
 - a. Character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area;
 - b. Living conditions of the existing occupiers of the property, particularly in regard of outdoor living space; and
 - c. Living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property, No.45 Huntingfield Road.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The proposal would host a blank and featureless rear elevation. This has been designed to overcome overlooking concerns relating to a previous planning application. The rear extension would be approximately two thirds the width of the existing dwelling that currently hosts fenestration within its rear elevation. The rear elevation of the dwelling is clearly visible from Huntingfield Road. A blank featureless rear elevation would be an uncharacteristic addition to this dwelling that would be out of keeping within this residential area. Consequently, the development would be visually harmful in public views when looking eastwards along Huntingfield Road.
6. Although the rear extension would be at a lower land level to those properties to the west on Huntingfield Road, it would be a prominent feature. I saw that there would be some screening provided by the existing hedge, however, this landscape feature could die or be removed and, therefore, cannot be relied upon to screen the development in public views. I do not agree with the appellant that the two storey rear extension would be a subordinate feature. I acknowledge that the front door of the appeal property is within the side elevation that faces Huntingfield Road. However, it does not necessarily follow that the extension should be considered akin to a side extension.
7. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. The proposal would, therefore conflict with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and the provisions of the Framework. That policy seeks, amongst other matters, development to be visually attractive.
8. I have been provided photographs and the plans relating to extensions that have been granted planning permission at nearby properties (7 Strand Road Planning Ref:19900364, 2 Strand Road Planning Ref:20090975 and 47 Huntingfield Road Planning Ref:20180248). There is some similarity in that those developments host blank side elevations. However, they are developments of a different nature and are, therefore, not directly comparable to this proposal. Therefore, the proposal before me can and should be considered on its own merits. Those other developments drawn to my attention offer little weight in support of the proposed development.

Living conditions (outdoor living space)

9. The resulting rear garden would be staggered with part being approximately 3m and the other part being approximately 6.5m in depth. The existing garden depth is already currently undersized when taking into consideration the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2 2020 that sets out standards for minimum rear garden depths. The SPD advocates a garden depth of 10m. The resulting rear garden following the erection of the rear extension would be increasingly undersized when applying the standards.
10. Currently the rear garden is split-level and does not lend itself to be of a useable form for the occupier's enjoyment. There is a limited area laid as grass to the rear of dwelling. Notwithstanding the reduction in garden area removal of the elevated hard surfaced area and the steps thereto would provide an improvement to the

quality of the external space by levelling out the rear garden to make it a more useable space. This would be an improvement to that of the existing circumstances at the site. Whilst the proposed development would not meet the criteria of the Council's adopted minimum rear garden depths there would be a clear improvement to the form and usability of the rear garden space associated with the dwelling. This would justify deviating from the good practice set out in the SPD in this particular case.

11. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not be harmful to the living conditions of the existing occupiers of the property, particularly in regard of outdoor living space. The proposal would, therefore comply with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and the provisions of the Framework. That policy seeks, amongst other matters, development to safeguard amenity of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land.

Living conditions (No.45 Huntingfield Road)

12. No.45 is positioned to the west of the appeal property and is sited at a higher land level. The proposed rear extension would bring built development into closer proximity to No. 45. However, the rear extension would be sited at a lower ground level. Outlook from No.45 would be of a rear extension more akin to that of a single storey extension. Given the lower land level and separation between developments, I do not consider the living conditions enjoyed by No.45 would be substantially harmed by the proposed development.
13. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property, No.45 Huntingfield Road. The proposal would, therefore comply with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and the provisions of the Framework. That policy seeks, amongst other matters, development to safeguard the amenity of its occupants.

Conclusion

14. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR