



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2024

by Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31.01.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/23/3330568

6-8 Longfield Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0EN

- 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 Ms. Coughlan & Fry against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20230701, dated 30 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is a minor roof raise to the main semi-detached dwelling roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a minor roof raise to the main semi-detached dwelling roof in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20230701, dated 30 June 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 087-P-001Rev A; 087-P-002Rev A; 087-P-299Rev B; 087-P-012Rev A; 087-P-309Rev A; 087-P-020 Rev A; 087-P-021 Rev A; 087-P-320Rev A and 087-P-321 Rev A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council referred to conflict with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in its decision notice. That version of the Framework has since been updated by a new version being issued in December 2023. However, the contents of paragraph 135 of the new version are the same as paragraph 130 of the old version. The policy approach in that respect therefore has not changed and I have referred to the new paragraph numbering accordingly.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property comprises a semi-detached house located on the northern side of Longfield Road and a short distance to the east of its junction with Huntingfield Road. There is a similar pair of semi-detached houses adjacent to the east, but the character of the area is mixed with bungalows to either side of both pairs of semi-detached houses, whilst opposite and at a slightly higher level is a primary school and further bungalows. Properties in Huntingfield Road are mainly two storey semi-detached and terraced houses.
5. The Council is concerned that the cumulative impact of the enlarged roof would increase its bulk and prominence in the streetscene and unbalance the visual relationship with the adjoining semi-detached property.
6. However, there is currently no architectural rhythm along the road given the diverse nature of property types and styles and I therefore do not see a change to one of the pairs of semi-detached properties as being critical, as it might have been for example, had the prevailing character been rows of semi-detached houses on either side. The actual increase in ridge height is relatively minor at 0.5 metres, and whilst I acknowledge the point made by the Council that this ignores any increase in bulk and massing of the roof, I do not consider that the increased bulk would be so significant so as to appear to be over dominant in the streetscene. In that context, there is a reasonable spacing to the bungalow to the west, which is also on a different alignment, whilst the bungalows on the opposite side of the road are at a higher level as noted above.
7. The resulting roof form would be very similar to properties in Huntingfield Road, as the appellant points out, and in terms of overall height, there are nearby examples of higher and more prominent roofs such as that of No 12 Longfield Road. That property occupies a prominent position on the junction of the two roads and indeed is seen in the background street view when approaching the appeal property from the east.
8. The appellant refers to a simpler roof form allowing for easier long term maintenance and prevention of water ingress as a result of the removal of the many valley sections which the current roof has. Although not decisive in its own right, it adds to the justification for the new roof in the absence of other visual harm, and is consistent with guidance in paragraph 135 of the National Planning Framework which refers to planning decisions adding to the quality of the area over the lifetime of the development.

Other matters

9. I note the representation of a nearby neighbour in respect of concerns that the revised roof form might facilitate future dormer windows. However, I agree with the view of the Council that such a possibility is not a consideration as part of this proposal. The Council raises no other objections in terms of any impact upon neighbouring amenity or the rural landscape character of the surrounding area, and I see no reason to disagree.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above, there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore be consistent with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of

the Framework, in that the development would be visually attractive, would integrate well with the surrounding area and add to the quality of the development for its lifetime.

11. Although the Council's decision notice also refers to conflict with its Householder Alterations/Extensions Guide, the officer report does not identify where such conflict exists.
12. Conditions for the development to be built in accordance with the approved plans and for matching materials, are necessary in the interests of certainty and visual amenity.
13. Accordingly, the appeal is allowed and planning permission granted.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR