
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/W/24/3345270

232 Singlewell Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 7RE

- 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 Karran Singh Dulai against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 20240243.
 - The proposed development is for demolition of an existing bungalow and construction of a new two storey dwelling house with a loft conversion along with an outbuilding. Alteration to front yard to have new boundary and front entrance from Singlewell Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on a) the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area; and b) the living conditions of the occupants of 230 Singlewell Road with regard to privacy and overbearing impact.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site consists of a detached bungalow on Singlewell Road with off-street parking on a driveway to the front. It is located within a row of other properties of differing scale and architectural style. The surrounding neighbourhood is generally residential in nature.
 4. The new house would be clearly visible from the public domain and the surrounding curtilages of other properties in the vicinity. To my mind, the greater depth and height of the appeal proposal and the more solid, rectangular form of the elevations would contrast significantly with the more diminutive proportions of the existing property. As such, the extent of development would not be sympathetic to the relatively modest scale of the current bungalow and those properties to either side.
 5. The cumulative impact of the mass and bulk at first floor level, together with the boxy, deep plan form - which would be visible from the public highway over the front garden of no. 230 - and extent of crown roof, would appear dominant and obtrusive. Overall, the scale and design of the proposals would lack architectural subtlety and the scheme would result in a harsh intrusion into the pleasant residential setting.
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6. I appreciate that the existing bungalow itself is low-grade, not architecturally distinguished and the area is not a particularly sensitive one in design or heritage terms. Nonetheless, such factors do not justify the magnitude of the scheme before me. Moreover, the locality comprises houses of varying size and appearance, including two-storey residences with crown roofs. However, these examples are set adjacent and in close proximity to other two-storey buildings where their deep plan nature is less obvious, and are the exception rather than the rule along Singlewell Road. In any event, the appearance of other dwellings would be a neutral consideration in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.
7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area. It would fail to meet Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (CS), which seeks to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Living conditions

8. The proposed layout and streetscene plans demonstrate that whilst the new house would be of greater height than the existing bungalow, it would be sited an appropriate distance from the flank border with no.230. In addition, there are no windows in the side wall of the neighbouring property that lies nearest to the common boundary, and the two-storey element of the appeal scheme would not project further to the rear than the hindmost elevation of no.230.
9. Primary openings would face front and rear towards either the public highway or over the back garden and existing mature vegetation; only oblique views would be afforded towards the rear amenity space of no.230. Two small windows are shown in the side elevation at first floor level that would look out over the roof and front lawn of no.230; the use of obscure glazing would prevent any undue loss of privacy. Taken in the round, given the separation distances involved and the positioning of the built form and openings, I am satisfied that the scheme would not result in any detrimental affects.
10. Consequently I find that there would be no adverse harm upon the living conditions of the occupants of 230 Singlewell Road with regard to privacy and overbearing impact, and thus the development would concord with Policy CS19 of the CS in relation to the protection of amenity. It would also be consistent with the Framework, which advocates safe and healthy living conditions.

Conclusion

11. In respect of the foregoing and all other factors, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR