



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 September 2012

by Paul Jackson B Arch (Hons) RIBA

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

Decision date: 26 September 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/A/12/2176537

Carpenders, Faversham Road, Boughton Aluph, Ashford, Kent TN25 4PR

- 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 Neale Jackson against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 12/00317/AS, dated 15 March 2012, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2012.
 - The development proposed is demolition of side extension to existing dwelling and existing garage; construction of new extension and new double garage to existing dwelling and construction of three detached dwellings with integral garaging.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property consists of an early 20th century detached house on a corner site at the northern edge of Kennington, a suburb of Ashford. There is no dispute that the surrounding garden can accommodate new housing and there are extant planning permissions for 2 additional houses on the site. The appeal proposal is for 3 new houses of similar size and a different site layout.
4. The surrounding area contains a variety of large, older properties in generous plots along Sandyhurst Lane and Faversham Road, and newer estate type developments off Trinity Road. A few residential closes have been created off Sandyhurst Road further to the west. From the public realm, the appeal site is seen in the context of the older houses and open countryside on the opposite side of Faversham Road, and has a semi-rural feel. The Grade II listed gatehouse to the former Eastwell Park lies immediately opposite the site but its setting would not be affected by the proposed development.
5. The predominant impression of existing development around the site is a sense of spaciousness. Neighbouring houses are set in long or wide garden plots. Three large houses have been built closer together recently in a short close, Eastwell Grange, adjacent to the south western boundary. This does not impinge on the appeal site, which is a well planted corner plot between a row of detached houses along Faversham Road and the neighbouring property in Sandyhurst Lane.

6. The new dwelling on plot B would lie more or less parallel to 'Ranworth', the neighbouring house to the south east in Faversham Road. Although accessed from the rear, it would appear in keeping with the orientation of other houses in the road including the existing house. The remaining 2 houses would be in the rear garden with an angled disposition to the existing dwelling, forming a close with a central turning area. In principle, a different orientation of houses at the rear need not be incongruous to the grain of the locality or appear out of keeping on this corner plot. The site could accommodate something different because of its polygonal plan shape. Nor is the proposal to create a close (as opposed to providing access directly from the road) something that is crucial to maintaining the character of the area; there are others nearby.
7. However, the density of built development proposed would be very significant at this site on the edge of the settlement. Not in terms of dwellings per hectare, but in terms of height and bulk. The proposed new houses would be of 5 bedrooms over 3 floors with generous living accommodation. The upper flat roofed ridge would be about 8 metres high and each new dwelling would have a side wing of about 6.6 metres high which would add significant volume. These factors, in combination with the close siting and angled orientation around the centre of the plot, would give the impression of an enclave of cramped modern development. The site is particularly visible on the outside of a curve in the Faversham Road and contributes to the open feel of the area. It is clearly perceived on exiting Lenacre Street in the context of the open countryside beyond Faversham Road and the open ground in front of the listed gatehouse to the north. Notwithstanding that there would be some additional boundary planting, the development would appear as a wide expanse of somewhat jumbled roofs and brickwork, with little visual relief, from many parts of the surrounding roads. Seen from the entrance to the site in Eastwell Grange, the combination of the full height and width and orientation would appear as a discordant urban element: the lack of space for planting in front of the dwellings due to the need for parking areas would enhance this effect.
8. Moreover, the density of built form on the site would be particularly apparent to neighbouring occupiers. The dwellings on plots B and C would not be so oppressive as to seriously disadvantage the occupiers of 'Ranworth' and No. 3 Eastwell Grange in terms of their living conditions or the use of their gardens, but due to their close proximity would significantly change the character of the immediate locality, which currently relies on a sense of spaciousness for its quality. Whilst trees on the boundary would currently screen some of the bulk, the likelihood that future occupiers of plots B and C may well wish to remove vegetation on the south side of their houses and gardens cannot be discounted; and this would be difficult to prevent. This matter reinforces my concern that the amount of development proposed now for this site is too great.
9. I have taken account of all the other matters raised, including the need to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens; in this case, the amount of green space that would remain around Carpenders is an important factor in contributing to the character of the local area. I conclude that the proposed development would be a step too far in terms of visual bulk on this site in the urban rural fringe that would seriously diminish the character and appearance of the area, conflicting with the design quality aims of policy CS1 of the Local Development Framework (LDF), policy CS9 of the adopted Ashford Borough Council LDF Core Strategy of 2008; and policy CC1 of the South East

Plan of 2009. The scheme would also fail to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness as required by paragraph 61 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The appeal must be dismissed.

Paul Jackson

INSPECTOR