



Planning Advisory Panel – NORTH (14 April 2020)

Delegated Report

Application no DC/20/0783/FUL

Location

45 Pier Avenue
Southwold
Suffolk
IP18 6BU

Expiry date 19 April 2020

Application type Full Application

Applicant Mr & Mrs S Hamilton

Parish Southwold

Proposal Single storey extensions to the side and rear and alterations to dwellinghouse

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Summary

This householder application concerns a single storey side and rear addition to 45 Pier Avenue in Southwold.

The application is to be considered at the Advisory Panel as the officer's 'minded to' recommendation differs from that of Southwold Town Council, which is one of Refusal.

Case for Development

The key issue is design which officers conclude is acceptable.

Site description

The property is a detached, two storey dwelling, believed to date from the 1930's and located on the southern side of Pier Avenue, facing north. The whole of the small town of Southwold falls within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Much of the town is also designated as a Conservation Area; however, this does not extend to some of the residential roads at the northern edge of the settlement, including Pier Avenue, therefore the Article 4 controls that also apply to the conservation area do not apply to properties in Pier Avenue. Despite this, the immediate area of the site is characterised by a wide tree lined highway bordered by a wide and interesting variety of good quality dwellings, some with an Arts and Crafts influence but also more modern and contemporary examples interspersed, all of varying heights.

No. 45 itself has a symmetrical appearance afforded by its traditional hipped roof with kicks at each corner and the pattern of windows. The house has a rendered exterior and white replacement upvc windows of an appropriate design, like many others in the neighbourhood. To the east side of the application site, no. 47, a modern bungalow, and its neighbour are set five metres further back in their respective plots while to the west is a substantial dwelling with a more unusual form, comprising a deep pitched roof with dormers and a two storey flat roofed side element. Directly opposite the site is a recently remodelled dwelling of contemporary style and alongside that are some three storey flats, all combining to give an eclectic feel to the area.

The application dwelling is set back seven metres from the pavement with a landscaped front garden behind a low wall and space for one vehicle to park at the eastern side, in front of the garage. Pier Avenue predominantly has a regular pattern and alignment of development with properties mostly detached yet closely spaced together.

There is no relevant planning history relating to no. 45.

Proposal

There is currently a large tandem brick garage with a flat roof positioned alongside the eastern side of the dwelling. Although detached by one metre, the structure has a covered walkway linking it to the house, appearing as an attached element externally. There is also a glazed conservatory spanning two thirds of the width across the rear of the dwelling.

It is proposed to replace both the garage and conservatory with new extensions, wrapping around the south eastern corner of the house. This will involve a 3.8 metre deep projection from the original rear wall, partly including an open verandah in front of the new garden room, covered by a lean-to, slate roof finishing at 3.75 metres in height. The new side extension will mostly cover the same footprint as the existing garage and be of a similar depth (11.5 metres compared with 11.8m currently); however it will be set considerably further back at 4.5 metres behind the front line of the house whereas the existing garage actually sits 1.2 metres forward of the dwelling.

In terms of height, the proposed extensions will have a low eaves height of 2.3 metres all round and comprise three different lean-to roof elements all with rooflights, ranging from a shallow 15 degrees to the tallest section where it would abut the northern flank wall and this would adjoin the house with a front gable at a height of 4.15 metres over a four metre length before dropping at the rear.

Consultations/comments

No third party representations received.

Consultees
Parish/Town Council

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Southwold Town Council	25 February 2020	17 March 2020
<p><i>“DC/20/0783/FUL Single storey extensions to the side and rear and alterations to dwelling house 45 Pier Avenue Southwold Suffolk IP18 6BU</i></p> <p><i>Recommendation: Refusal</i></p> <p><i>We assume that the size of the extension is beyond what constitutes permitted development within the AONB. Hence, the policies on design in the Local Plan and NPPF apply. The Local Plan adopts Building for Life as its detailed design guide but this only applies to large scale development (11 or more units). In the absence of a local design guide for small scale development, the National Design Guide (NDG) applies. (NDG, Para 14.) Both the Local Plan and NPPF put a high priority on good quality design, and schemes that do not achieve this should be refused. The NDG “supports paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.” (Para 11). In looking for opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area, a proposal should look to the best of the area.</i></p> <p><i>Good design, as set out in the NDG, requires development to be “integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them” (Para 39). In the case of an extension, the most important element of “their surroundings” is the existing building.</i></p> <p><i>Pier Avenue is a mixture of mostly good quality 20th century houses, many built in the 1930’s. No. 45 is a post Second World War building that first appears on the 1957 Ordinance Survey Map. (The earliest map before this is 1938). It is neo-Georgian with 1930’s influence, seen in the hipped roof and large Crittal windows (now replaced with PVC but retaining the Crittal style panes). It is a regular, symmetrical, with simple massing that relies on its regular proportions to make a dignified statement. It has a generous front garden with mature plantings and a large rear garden. Its proportions echo its next door neighbour – an arts and crafts style cottage built around the same time – and two early Edwardian villas across the street.</i></p>		

Figure 1 45 Pier Avenue and its neighbour



Figure 2 Pair of Edwardian villas on the opposite side of the street



The proposed front extension shows no understanding of the character of the house or what is best in the character of the area. Its design does not integrate with the building and, therefore, looks “stuck on.” It will have a negative impact on the street scape.

A suggestion for what could be done to achieve a better side extension can be found in the consented plans for Gun Hill House, South Green. DC/16/4498/FUL | Construction of a single storey porch, garden room and pantry, minor internal alterations | Gun Hill House Gun Hill Southwold Suffolk IP18 6HF. This building’s Georgian lines presented a challenge, which the architect resolved by working with, not against, the severe and symmetrical mass of the building. He created a square, subservient one story side extension with a roof light.

Local Plan:

Policy WLP8.29 "Design" requires that developments respond to local context and the form of surrounding buildings in relation to: the overall scale and character, layout, site coverage, height and massing of existing buildings, the relationship between buildings and spaces and the wider street scene or townscape and by making use of materials and detailing appropriate to the local vernacular.

The Southwold Neighbourhood Plan area has been approved but the Plan is not yet made.

Applying policy WLP8.29 to this scheme, and having regard to the concerns raised by Southwold Town Council, the following assessment is made by officers:

Scale and site coverage

The proposal is judged to be in proportion with the host building and not of an excessive scale or massing, with an increased floorspace of just 17 square metres. Its eastern line will remain as existing and a generous rear garden will remain.

In terms of its dimensions, the proposed rear element of the scheme would actually fall within the parameters of exempt permitted development which allows a four metre projection below four metres in height, even within the AONB as the Government deems this to be reasonable in respect of a detached dwelling and therefore this part of the proposal could proceed without control from the Local Planning Authority. With that in mind, whilst there may be some sympathy with the Town Council's suggestion that there is scope to explore other options regarding the scale and form of the rear extension, that which is currently proposed falls outside the scope of planning control and is therefore down to the homeowner.

External appearance

A matching painted render exterior finish is proposed along with slate tiles; both are deemed to be sympathetic to their surroundings and more appropriate than replicating the heavy red pantiles of the host dwelling, given the shallow pitch of the extension. Proposed fenestration has been criticised by the Town Council due to its asymmetrical arrangement and contrasting style.

The applicants have themselves responded to all the points raised by the Town Council. Their final paragraphs summarise their position thus:-

" We accept that the back extension is not symmetrical. The design has been driven by the function of the rooms, so, for instance, we would like our kitchen sink to overlook the garden which means we cannot have floor length windows in that area. But ... the garden is entirely private. The back extension cannot be seen from the road, and the trees in the gardens prevent all but glimpses from a very few upstairs bedroom windows in Hotson Road. Again, the design is to enable us to have as much energy efficient living space within as small a footprint as possible.

STC states we have a "large garden" and that therefore we can build into that more extensively. STC advocates sacrificing more of our garden by building over it to create a different style of extension. The large gardens in Pier Avenue are havens for birds and wildlife. We have a "wild" area in our garden which we wish to retain and extend. Therefore we wish to preserve as much of the garden as possible."

Officers are in agreement that the vaulted rooms are justified and as the rear extension could be constructed without planning permission the pattern and alignment of windows has not been queried in this instance.

All side extensions are however automatically covered by planning legislation within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty due to the public realm aspect and accordingly this is the key element of the proposal with regard to its height, scale, massing, design and finish.

Design

The proposed shallow lean-to roof will not be an alien feature in the streetscape as the neighbouring property no. 43 also has a similar lean-to subservient structure at its eastern end. The substantial setback proposed is considered to successfully mitigate the potential prominence of this feature in combination with the new lower eaves line, landscaping and alignment with the garage belonging to no.47. The new extension will be less dominant than the existing garage which is three metres tall and much further forward in the public realm.

The Town Council asserts that the lean-to form would be out of keeping and suggests that reference be taken from a parapet roofed extension to a property called Gun Hill House, which was indeed a well designed scheme. Officers agree that a more sensitive and authentic design response is necessary on sites of greater heritage value; Gun Hill House is a locally listed building immediately adjacent a Grade II listed property occupying the most prominent location in the town whereas the application site is not even within the conservation area. This is not to say that development proposals are less scrutinised, just that some level of flexibility is afforded within the scope of the policy, dependent upon the individual site, its surroundings and conservation status. Design is of course subjective; however in this case officers do not share the Town Council's view that harm would be caused to the streetscape as a result of this proposal.

Amenity Impact

Only one neighbour would be affected by this proposal; no. 47, the bungalow to the east and no objections have been received. A separation distance of seven metres will remain between the proposed rear corner of the extension and the bungalow, resulting in no adverse impact to light levels or shade to the rear and the new position and eaves height of the side extension will be less oppressive to the neighbour at this side.

Parking

The function of the side extension is to incorporate a new ground floor bedroom wing. This will result in the loss of the garage facility and also increase the total number of bedrooms by one; therefore parking is a material consideration. Often in Southwold, proposals can result in a deficit in parking provision, creating an issue in this busy seaside town with its high number of visitors. On this occasion, at least two off road parking spaces serving the property will be preserved (with four shown on the block plan), arising from the setting back of the side structure, which is welcomed. No alterations to the highway would be required and as the site falls outside the Article 4 area, the physical changes to the frontage are also not controlled. However as the area is likely to exceed five square metres a condition requiring some form of drainage is appropriate.

Conclusion

The proposals are deemed to be of a modest nature and respectful of their surroundings, not conflicting with policy aims when considered within the site context.

Recommendation

Approval recommended subject to conditions

Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within a period of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be completed in all respects strictly in accordance with the Drawing dated 10th February 2020 containing site plan, block plan, proposed floor plans and all elevations, received 24th February 2020,, for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building unless annotated otherwise on the drawing hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory external appearance of the development.

4. An appropriate method of drainage shall be incorporated as part of any hardsurfacing works to the front of the property, in compliance with Class F of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Reason: to alleviate the risk of surface water flooding onto the adjacent highway.

Informatives:

1. The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.
2. East Suffolk Council is a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Authority.

The proposed development referred to in this planning permission may be chargeable development liable to pay Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) under Part 11 of the Planning Act 2008 and the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

If your development is for the erection of a new building, annex or extension or the change of use of a building over 100sqm in internal area or the creation of a new dwelling, holiday let of any size or convenience retail , your development may be liable to pay CIL and you must submit a CIL Form 2 (Assumption of Liability) and CIL Form 1 (CIL Questions) form as soon as possible to CIL@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

A CIL commencement Notice (CIL Form 6) must be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the commencement date. The consequences of not submitting CIL Forms can result in the loss of payment by instalments, surcharges and other CIL enforcement action.

CIL forms can be downloaded direct from the planning portal:

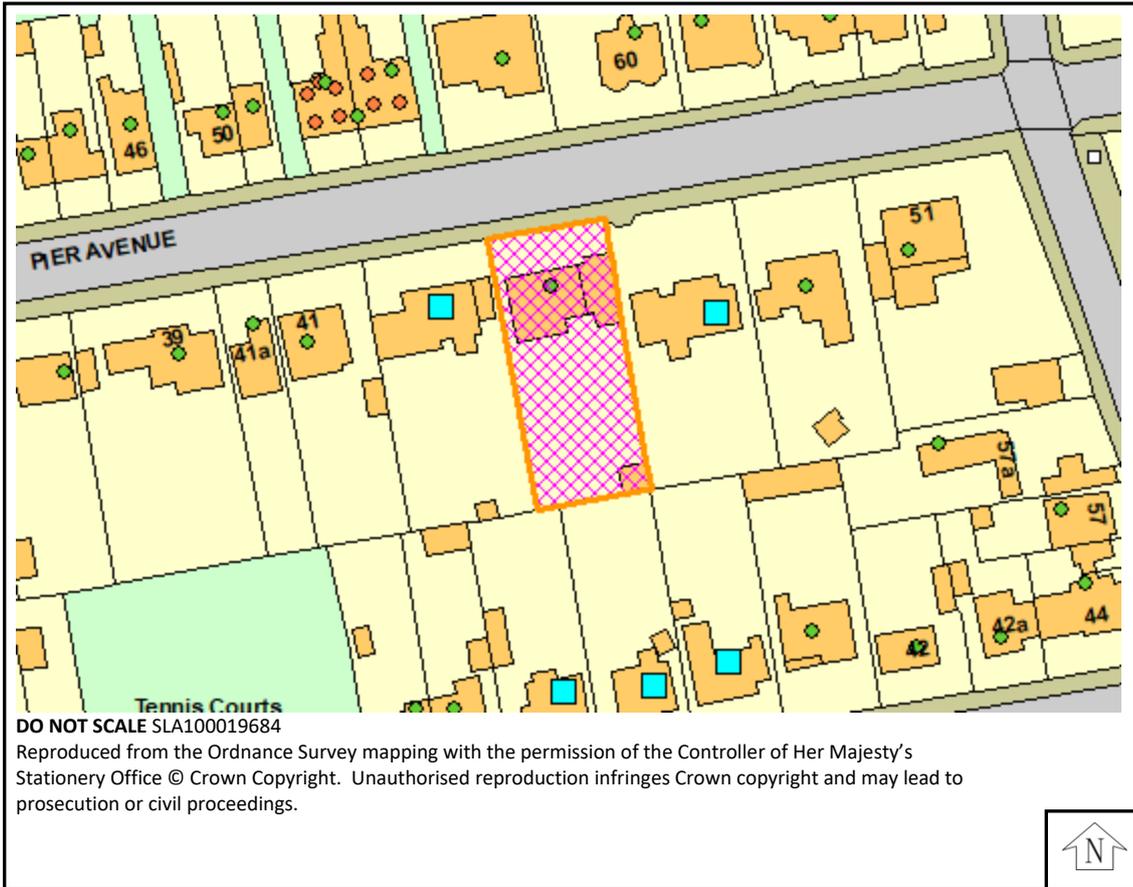
https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200136/policy_and_legislation/70/community_infrastructure_levy/5

Guidance is viewable at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy>

Background information

See application reference DC/20/0783/FUL at <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=Q65A0IQXHYW00>

Map



Key

-  Notified, no comments received
-  Objection
-  Representation
-  Support