

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2016

by Graham Chamberlain BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 30th September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/16/3156971

20 Impett's Lane, Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire CB21 5BY

- 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 Jon Nicholls against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref S/1451/16/FL, dated 27 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey front and rear extensions, loft conversion and alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effects of the proposed development:
 - On the character and appearance of the area: and
 - The living conditions of the occupants of 22 Impett's Lane, with particular reference to outlook.

Reasons

The effect on character and appearance

3. The appeal site encompasses a two storey detached property set back from, and fronting onto, Impett's Lane, a narrow residential street that is located adjacent to the Fulbourn Recreation Ground. The properties within Impett's Lane exhibit a varied character and appearance with both modern traditional properties present. This diverse appearance is reinforced by the mix of bungalows and houses arranged in an inconsistent and staggered building line. This spatial arrangement has resulted in the appeal property having a reasonably large front garden.
 4. The appeal scheme includes a two storey rear extension and a two storey front extension that would include accommodation in the roof linking through to a loft conversion in the existing house. The 'alterations' referred to in the description of development are the application of render and cladding to the external walls of the existing house and the insertion of replacement powder coated aluminium windows. These alterations would utilise materials of a different appearance to the existing and thus require permission.
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5. The front extension would be a large and disproportionate addition to the host property that would lack a sufficient degree of subservience due to the height, width and overall massing proposed. The appellant's attempt to articulate the property into distinct 'volumes' is acknowledged. But this would be unsuccessful in mitigating the harm arising from the front extension due to the excessive overall extent of massing proposed. Moreover, the cumulative and extensive depth and bulk of the extended property would be discernable from the public realm and would, in my view, appear bulky and discordant when viewed alongside the more modest proportions of properties nearby. As such, the proposed front extension would be harmfully prominent and imposing in views along Impett's Lane and from the adjoining recreation ground.
6. I do not consider the variety in the appearance of the properties in Impett's Lane would mitigate for the excessive scale of the proposed extension, especially so as 22 Impett's Lane is a modest bungalow. The juxtaposition of the enlarged scale and massing of the appeal property next to the more diminutive scale of those nearby would appear discordant. The proposed front extension would therefore harm the character and appearance of the area.
7. In reaching the above finding I have considered the Council's Design Guide¹. This states that extension should be subservient to, and complementary of, the host property and that this will usually involve a lower roof and eaves height and a significantly smaller footprint, spans and lengths of elevations. Whilst the ridge height of the proposed front extension would be marginally lower than the existing property, the front extension would otherwise fail to adhere to the guidance in the SPD. This weighs against the proposal.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed front extension would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies DP/2 and DP/3 of the South Cambridgeshire District Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007 (DPC), which seek to protect the character and appearance of the district. Aims consistent with Paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)

The effect on living conditions

9. The appeal property is located to the west of 22 Impett's Lane (No. 22), a bungalow set broadly in line with the existing forward projection of the appeal property house. Consequently, No 22 would also be in line with the proposed front extension at the appeal site. No. 22 has two large side windows with an aspect towards the appeal site. The proposed front extension would be a two storey structure located adjacent to these windows.
10. As such, the outlook from the side windows of No. 22 would be compromised by the proposed front extension at the appeal site. However, the room that the windows serve is dual aspect with a large window overlooking the recreation ground. Whilst the proposed extension would undoubtedly have an effect on the living conditions of the occupants of No 22 it would not, on balance, result in material harm. As such, the extension would not conflict with the relevant sections of Policy DP/3 of the DCP and the Council's Design Guide, which seeks to protect the living conditions of residents, an aim consistent with Paragraph 17 of the Framework.

¹ District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010

Other Matters

11. I would need to see further evidence before I was satisfied that the parking and manoeuvring space proposed to serve the extended dwelling would be adequate. Likewise, I would also need to see further evidence to ascertain whether there would be an acceptable impact on the setting of the nearby conservation area. However, given my conclusion on the first main issue it is not necessary for me to consider these matters further.
12. I note that the Council have not objected to the proposed rear extension. Nevertheless, the absence of harm in respect of this part of the overall scheme would not mitigate for the harm I have identified. I also note the appellant's suggestion that the existing house is of little architectural merit. Be that as it may, for the reasons I have already outlined, the appeal scheme would not be a marked improvement. As such, my conclusion on the first main issue is unaltered.
13. I share the view of the appellant that the significant set back of the appeal property and the inconsistent building line in Impett's Lane are factors that would support a form of front extension. This has been demonstrated through the approval by the Council of such an extension (Ref. S/2566/15/FL). However, the appeal scheme would be of a considerably greater scale than the approved scheme and harmful for the reasons I have already outlined. As such, neither the siting of the existing house nor the previous approval of a front extension justifies the excessive and disproportionate scale of the appeal scheme before me.

Conclusion

14. Whilst the effect on the living conditions of the occupants of No. 22 would be acceptable, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. This harm would outweigh the neutral impact on living conditions. As a consequence, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Graham Chamberlain
INSPECTOR