



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 October 2016

by Richard Schofield BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/D/16/3156558
63 London Road, Towcester, NN12 6AJ

- 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 Martin Broadbent against the decision of South Northants District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2016/1110/FUL, dated 26 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is Demolition of Existing Buildings/Conservatory & Construction of Single Storey Side & Rear Extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of existing buildings/conservatory and construction of single storey side and rear extensions at 63 London Road, Towcester, NN12 6AJ, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref S/2016/1110/FUL, dated 26 April 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) the development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan 1606-03; Site Block Plan 1606-04; and Proposed Ground/First Floor Plan Layouts, Typical Section and Elevations 1606-02A.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on 63 London Road (No 63) and, thus, the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. No 63 is one half of a pair of two-storey semi-detached dwellings dating from around the mid-20th century. It has an attached flat roofed garage, with parapet, which appears to be contemporary with the house, and a large rear conservatory extension¹. It is reasonable to consider that No 63 and its neighbour (No 61) were originally a matching pair, but No 61 has been altered very substantially, both front and rear, such that any sense of symmetry between the two dwellings has been lost.

¹ Which had been demolished at the time of my site visit

4. The dwellings sit at one end of a short run of blocks of semi-detached and terraced dwellings of roughly comparable age. Although these dwellings all appear to be approximate contemporaries, there is no longer any strong sense of uniformity of design among them.
5. The appeal scheme would, essentially, replace the current flat roofed garage with a wider, deeper flat roofed garage, with parapet, and a flat roofed rear extension. Any awareness of the presence of the latter from the public realm would be almost non-existent, as the plot is elevated well above the street and set well back from it behind a deep front garden/driveway. It would be visible to some extent from the rear of No 61² and the rear of one or two dwellings on Marlow Road, but its visual impact would be limited due to the distances and angles involved.
6. The double garage would be more prominent, but not unduly so. It would replicate the style of the structure that already exists and, again, being set so far up and back from the road, would not register particularly with passers-by. Indeed, it would be completely screened, when approaching Towcester, by the dense vegetation around the boundary of 69 Marlow Road.
7. Notwithstanding this, just because development is not particularly visible does not make it *de facto* acceptable and I note the Council's view that the flat roofed design of the extant garage is not one of the strongest features of No 63's appearance. It is a feature, however, and I am not persuaded that replicating it would give rise to any significant harm in this particular instance, given the wider context outlined above. Nor am I persuaded that the appeal scheme would appear as any more of a 'bolt-on addition' than the extant garage or conservatory. Indeed, it would arguably bring about a more coherent design to the single storey aspects of the dwelling.
8. I conclude that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on No 63 and, thus, the character and appearance of the area. It would not conflict, therefore, with South Northamptonshire Local Plan policies G3(A), EV1 and H17(i). These seek, among other things, to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing character of the locality and respects the scale and character of the existing dwelling and of neighbouring development.
9. Nor would it conflict with relevant guidance in chapter 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires good design of new development.
10. The South Northants Supplementary Planning Guidance for Residential Extensions (SPG) states that '*very rarely will flat roofs be considered acceptable*' and '*that flat roofs are normally unacceptable*'. This, however, is in the context of dormer and roof extensions, not single storey extensions, and it does not preclude their use. It also notes that '*occasionally they [flat roofs] can be provided to single storey additions, hidden behind parapets where appropriate*'. This being so, it is clear that the SPG allows the decision maker to take account of context when reaching a view on whether flat roofs are acceptable. I find no conflict with the SPG.

² I note that the Officer's report is clear that the proposed scheme would be 'largely hidden from view' by the extant additions to No 61.

Other Matters

11. I note the representations of the occupier of a neighbouring dwelling, which is assumed to be 69 Marlow Road (No 69). With regard to highway safety, No 63 has an extensive front parking area such that I see no reason why any construction vehicles would need to be parked on the highway.
12. Turning to living conditions, the depth of No 69's rear garden, the tall, mature boundary hedge between it and No 63, and the limited height of the proposed extension are such that I see no reason why the appeal scheme would have any impact on light to or outlook from the house or garden at No 69.
13. Concerns were also expressed about loss of trees arising from the appeal scheme, but it was not readily apparent from my site visit where such trees were to be found.

Conditions

14. The Council has proposed two conditions, relating to the timing of the commencement of development and adherence to the approved plans, which are not disputed by the appellant. These are necessary to ensure certainty in the delivery of the appeal scheme.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Richard Schofield

INSPECTOR