
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 September 2016

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 11 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/16/3156958

40 Springfield Crescent, Harpenden AL5 4LH

- 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 and Mrs Chisnall against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/16/0995, dated 1 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 May 2016.
 - The development proposed was originally described as “re-submission of application for a two storey side extension, having taken on the comments of previous objections of the neighbours”.
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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 street scene of Springfield Crescent.

Reasons

3. Springfield Crescent is predominantly characterised by semi-detached properties with regular sized gaps between buildings and side boundaries. There are few two storey side extensions on this road, and those that do exist are set back considerably from the front elevation and have a subservient relationship with the original property.
 4. The road rises from east to west, with the appeal site towards the top of the slope on a corner plot. As a result, the existing semi-detached property at No 40 is clearly visible looking up the road from the north-east, but its flank elevation is set back from the road to avoid being overly prominent.
 5. According to the appellant, the proposed two storey side extension has been amended from a previous planning application to set it back from the side boundary and the front and rear elevations of the existing property, with a slightly lower ridge height and a hipped roof. The extension would also utilise materials and a design to match the existing property.
 6. However, the proposed development would be over 50% of the width of the existing property and occupy most of the space to the side of the existing flank elevation. The set back at front, rear, ridge and side would be minimal and the development would present a large and bulky flank elevation very close to the
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adjoining grass verge and pavement notwithstanding the hipped roof design. With the location of the development on an elevated corner plot, it would appear overly prominent and bulky in the street scene. While there would be no terracing effect due to the corner plot, it would greatly enlarge and unbalance the pair of semi-detached properties and look out of keeping with the pattern of existing development along the street.

7. The appellant has highlighted a number of examples of similar development on corner plots in the surrounding area which I looked at during my site visit. I do not know the planning history behind each example, but none are identical to the proposed development in terms of design or topography. In any case, they do not justify the harmful effect that the proposed development would have on the street scene of Springfield Crescent.
8. The Council indicates that extensions and alterations to this property are possible. However, it is not my role to set out what would be acceptable, including the distance of the flank elevation from the side boundary, as any revised plans ought to be discussed between the appellant and the Council and, where necessary, subject to a fresh planning application.
9. To conclude, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the street scene of Springfield Crescent. Therefore, it would not accord with Policies 69 and 72 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 which require development to take into account the local context and relate to the scale, character and appearance of the street. It would also not meet the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks good design and development that responds to local character.

Other Matters

10. I note that the extension would provide greater flexibility of space for families, while the appellant is also willing to provide additional off-street parking to address the concerns of local residents. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR