
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2016

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DMS DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/W/16/3152633

69 and 71 Trowley Rise, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire WD5 0LN

- 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 Trevor Woodger against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/0251/RSP, dated 3 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is the rear infill extension of both 69 and 71 and the extension of the current roof structure creating a crown roof and dormer window structure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Nos 69 and 71 Trowley Rise form a pair of quite typical inter-war semi-detached houses, with hipped roofs and pebble-dashed walls. The houses are within a straight section of street which contains mainly detached and semi-detached houses of a similar age, but with some more recent development. The houses are generally quite closely arranged, are set back from the road and have long back gardens. The housing styles vary but there is a quite coherent character to the development along this section of Trowley Rise, due to the dwellings being of comparable scale, following a general building line and with a predominance of inter-war suburban architecture.
 4. No 71 has been extended recently at two-storeys at the side and to the rear, and work is underway to construct similar additions to No 69. This proposal would involve raising the ridge heights of the hipped side roof to the existing extension to No 71, and to that approved at No 69, and filling the gap at the rear so that the additions combine with a crown-roof arrangement, containing two dormer windows.
 5. The neighbouring house to the east at No 67 has also been extended at first floor level to the rear and side and, as this dwelling is already set slightly forward of No 69, this provides some enclosure within the street scene and screens the east elevation proposed from more oblique angles. Similarly,
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No 71a provides some screening of the west elevation of No 71 from that direction.

6. However, by increasing the ridge height of the rear extensions to slightly below the front part of the house would mean these would no longer appear subordinate. The effect would be to add a substantial mass to the existing houses which would subsume their original form. Appendix 2 of the Council's Development Management Policies¹ (DM) provides design criteria which generally discourages crown roofs in favour of more traditional pitched roofs. The rationale is that crown roofs can, as would be the case with this proposal, exacerbate the depth of properties and result in inappropriate bulk and massing.
7. There is some diversity to the architecture in this part of the street. However, the impression gained from my site visit supports the Council's view that the dwellings here are characterised mainly by traditional pitched roofs and that extensions have generally respected the roof forms of the host dwelling and the character of the street scene.
8. The proposed roof ridge would disguise the flat section of crown roof and the two large dormer windows at the rear would be less prominent from the street. However, whilst the adjacent houses offer some screening from a further distance, this proposal would be visually evident from closer quarters. The excessive mass and bulk of the extensions would detract from the traditional appearance of these houses. This would result in a development which would harm to the character and appearance of the street scene.
9. The proposal would conflict with Policy CP1 of the Council's Core Strategy² (CS) which, in providing an overarching approach to sustainable development, promotes buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness. It would not provide the high standard of design sought by CS Policy CP12, which expects proposals to make efficient use of land whilst respecting the distinctiveness of the surrounding area, including in respect of character, scale, height and massing. This scheme would also not comply with DM Policy DM1 which applies the design criteria of Annex 2 to ensure that development does not lead to a gradual deterioration in the quality of the built environment.

Conclusion

10. The Council's policies are consistent with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework to always seek to secure high quality design. The extensions proposed would add substantial mass and bulk to these houses, detracting from their character and appearance and that of this area generally. I conclude, therefore, that this appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Price

INSPECTOR

¹ Three Rivers District Council Local Plan – Development Management Policies Local Development Document – adopted July 2013

² Three Rivers District Council Local Development Framework – Core Strategy – adopted 17 October 2011