The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visits made on 24 October and 2 November 2016

by Grahame Gould BA MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/16/3157535
33 Oakfield Road, Harpenden AL5 2NP

- 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 Lawrence O'Kelly against the decision of St Albans City and District Council.
- The application Ref 5/16/1278, dated 25 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 June 2016.
- The development proposed is a two storey rear extension with first floor juliet balcony, alterations to roof with front and rear facing dormer windows to create habitable room, part single storey, part first floor front extension, garage conversion and relocation of integral garage, new front porch with canopy roof over and canopy roof over new integral garage, new pitched roof to rear dormers, alterations to openings, removal of chimney, plus two side facing and one rear facing rooflight at roof level.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey rear extension with first floor juliet balcony, alterations to roof with front and rear facing dormer windows to create habitable room, part single storey, part first floor front extension, garage conversion and relocation of integral garage, new front porch with canopy roof over and canopy roof over new integral garage, new pitched roof to rear dormers, alterations to openings, removal of chimney, plus two side facing and one rear facing rooflight at roof level at 33 Oakfield Road, Harpenden AL5 2NP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/16/1278, dated 25 April 2016, subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

    2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: J1167/P01 Revision A – Site location plan and block/roof plan; J1167/P04 Revision C – Proposed plans, elevations and section sheet 1 of 3; J1167/P05 Revision C – Proposed plans, elevations and section sheet 2 of 3; and J1167/P06 – Proposed plans, elevations and section sheet 3 of 3.

    3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

    4) Prior to the first occupation of the development and for the duration of its occupation the first floor side facing en-suite bathroom windows shall

be glazed with obscure glass and shall be non-opening below a height of 1.7 metres taken from the internal finished floor level.

Procedural Matters

2. The appealed application seeks to amend the development subject to a planning permission (reference 5/14/2648) for various alterations to the appeal property (No 33). Elements of the previously permitted development have already been implemented and in the banner heading and the formal decision above I have described the development in the terms used on the application form, as opposed to that adopted by the Council, to ensure that the description covers all aspects of the development for which permission was sought.

3. I undertook unaccompanied and access required site visits respectively on 24 October 2016 and 2 November, the latter being necessary so that I could view the rear of No 33.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of No 33 and Oakfield Road.

Reasons

5. No 33 is a substantial detached house of a bespoke design. Amongst other things the development would involve the raising of the property's ridge line at the southern end of the property to allow for the insertion of new front and rear dormer to enable the provision of accommodation at second floor level. The ridge line would be raised by around 1.2 metres, there already being a slight step in the ridge line towards the northern end of the property. It is also proposed that the volume of the roof above the two storey rear extension previously approved would be increased and that this section of the roof would have a single hipped form in substitution for twin hips.

6. I am appreciative of the Council's caution with respect to the partial raising of No 33's roof, however, this property already has a quite complex roof form and the increase in height would, I estimate, affect just under a third of the roof's width. Both the front and rear dormers would be of quite modest proportions and their roofs would be set below the intended ridge level. The dormers would therefore have a subservient appearance.

7. Given the aforementioned characteristics of the part of the roof to be raised and the scale of the dormers, I consider that the roof alterations would not be out of proportion and would not be harmful to this property's appearance.

8. Oakfield Road is characterised by houses of one off designs of varying sizes and the individual properties within this street have quite varied roof forms. While No 33's partially raised ridge line would be visible within the streetscene, I find that this change to the property would be of a scale that would not be at odds with the wider character and appearance of Oakfield Road.

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the development would not be harmful to the character and appearance of No 33 or Oakfield Road. There would therefore be no conflict with saved Policies 69 and 72 of the City and

District of St Albans District Local Plan Review of 1994, in that the development would be of a scale and design that would be respectful of the appearance of No 33 and its surroundings. I therefore also find that there would be no conflict with the parts of the National Planning Policy Framework that address design, most particularly paragraphs 17 (the fourth core planning principle), 56 and 58.

Conditions

10. Apart from the standard time limit condition, I find it necessary that the development should be built to accord with the submitted plans for certainty and be constructed with external materials to match those of the existing property, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

11. To safeguard the privacy of the occupiers of No 35 it is necessary that the first floor en-suite bathroom windows in the southern elevation should be fitted with obscure glazing. However, I consider it unnecessary for this condition to specify the level of obscuring achieved to a particular manufacturer's standard, because the glass might be sourced from another supplier. I also consider it unnecessary for the dressing room rooflight windows to be fitted with obscured glazing because of the height they would have above the level of the first floor.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

Grahame Gould

INSPECTOR