
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/16/3156212

19 Toulmin Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6EE

- 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 A Booth against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/16/1669, dated 25 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey front extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached two storey house with two storey extension to the side. The property is located in a mature well-established residential area and set back from the road behind a front garden/driveway. A number of dwellings have existing front extensions, although these generally appear as clearly subordinate to the main house.
 4. The proposal would entail the construction of a two storey front gabled roofed extension measuring about 1.89m in depth and about 3.9m in width. It would be extended forward broadly in line with the two storey side extension, which projects in front of the original front elevation of the house.
 5. I consider that the proposed extension, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, would appear very much at odds with the simple form and appearance of the host property and would be out of character with the generally more modest front extensions in the area. These shortcomings are exacerbated by the extension's prominent position, which would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Toulmin Drive. As such I consider that the proposed front extension would significantly detract from the form of the host property and result in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition to the street scene.
 6. I have considered the appellants arguments that the design of the extension is intended to complement and improve the appearance of the property. Whilst
-

the use of matching materials and fenestrations would assist in integrating the proposed extension with the design of the existing dwelling, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above. I have considered the appellants comments regarding the context provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) for good design and the importance of considering the local character and distinctiveness but I find that this proposal does not achieve the standards the Framework seeks. I also note the appellants comments regarding the unsympathetic design of the existing two storey extension and the lack of formal objections from the neighbouring properties. Whilst this maybe so, this does not set a precedent for such an inappropriate development in this location for the reasons set out above. I therefore accord these matters limited weight.

7. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellants. The extensions and gable designs along Toulmin Drive and nearby streets have different development and locational characteristics to the appeal scheme. On the basis of the limited evidence provided I am not convinced that their circumstances are compellingly similar to those of the present appeal proposal. I therefore accord them limited weight as precedents in this case.
8. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed extension would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area. It would conflict with policies 69 and 72 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is of an adequately high standard of design that take into account scale, character and appearance of its surroundings and that extensions to dwellings are compatible with the original building in terms of design, roof form, detailing and materials.
9. In addition, it would not accord with the Framework that development should seek to secure a high quality of design (paragraph 17); to respect the local character (paragraph 58); and to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness (paragraph 60).

Conclusion

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

David Troy

INSPECTOR