

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2016

by M Brookes BA MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/16/3159757

41 St Huberts Close, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 7EN

- 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 Ricky Bika against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application, Ref. 16/01298/FUL, dated 11 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 September 2016.
 - The development proposed comprises a new front porch, a single storey rear extension, a two storey side extension and a front garage.
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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 character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Development in St Huberts Close is of distinctive character and appearance, generally comprising wide-fronted houses with well-balanced, largely unarticulated front elevations and attached double garages in a spacious landscape setting. The spaciousness derives from the set-back of buildings from the road beyond substantial open plan gardens and from gaps between the houses, particularly above the garages. The landscaped setting largely comprises front gardens of lawns with some substantial trees and shrubs and larger trees to the rear of properties that are mainly visible from the road between the houses and in particular over the garages.
 4. These common features create a general uniformity and harmony to the street scene of St Huberts Close but, in the vicinity of the appeal site (Nos 20-32 and 31-57 St Huberts Close) this is particularly striking because the buildings share a number of layout and design features. The houses and garages are of similar width and are regularly spaced along the road, providing a clear rhythm to the street scene. Garages are positioned in line with or slightly recessed from the main front walls, the roofs are all of similar shallow pitch and there are shutters to windows on the front elevations.
 5. This distinctive and homogeneous landscape and townscape character resulted in most of St Huberts Close being identified in the South Bucks Townscape
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Character Study Part 2 Revision A (July 2015) as an Area of Special Character. It is an area that falls broadly within the 'Open Plan Suburban' character typology identified in the Study, but is seen as distinct. The area is considered to be sensitive to new development as a result of its homogeneity and the development pressure that appears to already exist along its edges.

6. The appeal proposal includes the forward projection of the existing garage and the creation of a first floor over the existing structure and its single storey link to the main body of the house.
7. The first floor extension would significantly increase the two storey width of the property. This would detract from the spacious setting of the building, would restrict views from the road of trees to the rear and would disrupt the rhythm and harmony of the street scene. Because of its substantial width and the minimal set-back of the front wall and set-down of its roof it would also be harmful to the well-balanced character and appearance of the existing property.
8. The forward projection of the garage would further increase the dominance of the extension and would in itself be a most uncharacteristic and harmful feature in the street scene.
9. In reaching these conclusions I have taken into account the extensions that have taken place in the road and in particular those over garages. However, they are not characteristic of the area and do not materially mitigate or justify the harm that the appeal proposal would cause.
10. In summary, the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would conflict with saved Policy H11 of the South Bucks District Local Plan (1999) (LP) that proposals to alter and extend existing residential dwellings will only be permitted where it would not have an adverse impact on the character or amenities of the locality in general. It would also conflict with LP Policy EP3 which states that poor designs which are out of scale or character with their surroundings will not be permitted and that the retention and provision of space between buildings should respect the scale of spaces in the locality. The development would not accord with one of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework that planning should always seek to secure high quality design.

Other Matters

11. I have had regard to all other matters raised by third parties but do not find that they constitute grounds for dismissing the appeal. In particular, having regard to its limited projection to the rear of adjacent properties, its distance from potentially affected windows and gardens and to ground levels, I conclude that the two storey side/rear extension would not unacceptably reduce daylight, sunlight or privacy in any adjacent property.
12. I acknowledge that the extension would provide useful additional accommodation at the appeal property, but that benefit does not outweigh the harm it would cause.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

M Brookes

INSPECTOR