
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2016

by Richard Aston BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 09th December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/16/3160168

24 Oakwood Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL4 0XD

- 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 & Mrs I Simcock against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/2016/1862, dated 14 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey side/rear extension plus single storey rear extension.
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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 dwelling located in a street of similar properties. There is a substantial gap between the dwelling and No. 26, which gives access to playing fields to the rear. As a result, the host property is particularly visible on the approach along this part of Oakwood Drive.
 4. Although there is an existing single storey side and rear extension, the proposal would be two storeys high and with a deep gable that would project significantly beyond the rear elevation. It would also be sited partly across the rear elevation of the original dwelling and overall, it would result in a significant elongation of built form to the side and rear of the dwelling.
 5. Although the extension would be set back from the front elevation, the ridge of the roof would be only negligibly lower than that of the existing dwelling. In combination with the scale, form and height of the extension, in such proximity to the boundary, the proposal would result in a significant and overly dominant continuation of the mass of the existing house. This would substantially change the appearance of the host property when viewed from the street.
 6. This effect would be further exacerbated by the siting and design of the roof, which would appear divorced from the existing roof and its form and appearance, which would not be reflective of it. When viewed from the street
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there would be an awkward and jarring juxtaposition of roof forms that would be unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the host property and the properties along this side of the road. Overall, the proposal would not represent a high standard of design and would be an unduly dominant and overly prominent addition that would be at odds with the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

7. Although the appellant has indicated that he would be willing to change the design of the roof, such a revision is not before me as part of this appeal. I also do not consider it is a matter which could be addressed by a condition as it is likely to modify the development in such a way as make it substantially different from that originally applied for.
8. For these reasons, the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and area and would conflict with Policies 69 and 72 of the St Alban's District Local Plan Review 1994 ('LP'). Amongst other things, these seek to ensure an extension relates to the domestic scale, character and appearance of the street, is of a high standard of design and is compatible with the original building.
9. Although the LP pre-dates the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') and is of some vintage, I find these policies are consistent with it. Accordingly, the proposal would also conflict with the design objectives of the Framework.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has drawn my attention to an extension at No. 7 Oakwood Drive, which I was able to view at my site visit. Furthermore, that the Council raise no objections in terms of the effect on living conditions or parking provision. However, I have not been provided with the full details of that case and I cannot be certain that the circumstances and judgements required in that case are directly comparable to the proposal before me. In any event, each case must be determined on its own merits and the presence of that extension and the lack of objection on other grounds does not outweigh the significant harm I have identified in relation to the main issue.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole and the Framework. Having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Aston

INSPECTOR