
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/16/3158932

17 Hawfield Gardens, Park Street, St Albans AL2 2PB

- 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 Ms Julie Chadwick against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/2016/1893, dated 17 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey side and rear extensions with rooflights and first floor side extension with alterations to openings at 17 Hawfield Gardens, Park Street, St Albans AL2 2PB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/2016/1893, dated 17 June 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: 2395-02, 2395-01 Rev B and 2395-03 Rev A.

Procedural Matter

2. Notwithstanding the description of development set out above, which is taken from the application form, it is clear from the plans, accompanying details and appeal form that the development comprises single storey side and rear extensions with rooflights and first floor side extensions with alterations to openings. The Council dealt with the proposal on this basis and so have I.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two storey part brick, part render dwelling located on the corner of Hawfield Gardens and Magnolia Close. The side elevation facing Magnolia Close is particularly visible on the approach along Hawfield Gardens.
 5. The street is characterised by single storey and two storey detached dwellings of varying sizes and styles. Development that exists very close to the side
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boundaries of properties was evident, including No. 13 Hawfield Gardens which lies opposite the appeal site. Furthermore, there are a wide variety of roof forms, front projections and bay windows at ground and first floor level on the properties, which results in a considerable variation in appearance and a general lack of uniformity within the street.

6. I agree with the Council that the scale, form and height of the extensions would be clearly subordinate to the host property and would be of an appropriate design and appearance. The proposal would result in a continuation of the mass and depth of the dwelling by extending built form along the side boundary, in particular at ground floor level. However, in the context of a street that has such variations in the appearance of the properties and built form very close to the side boundaries, given the subservient scale and mass of the side extensions the proposal would not appear cramped or visually overbearing.
7. The first floor side extension would be conspicuous on the approach along the street and across the front garden of No. 13. In my view, its design and form would result in a sensitive addition to the streetscene because the height would not be excessive and it would be clearly articulated from the main dwelling and subordinate to it. Consequently, it would not be overly prominent or unduly dominant and in its context it would represent a high standard of design.
8. For these reasons, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area and would not 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. 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 not conflict with the design objectives of the Framework.

Conditions

9. The Council has only requested that a condition is required to ensure compliance with the approved plans. I consider that this is necessary in order to provide clarity.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would not conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole or the Framework. Having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Richard Aston

INSPECTOR