

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2016

by Ian McHugh Dip TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/16/3158212

3 Chaucer Grove, Borehamwood, WD6 2FF

- 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 Gary Green against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/0980/HSE, dated 19 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a loft dormer addition.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the appeal was lodged and prior to this decision, the Council has adopted the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADM). Consequently the policies of the SADM now attract full weight in decision making.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the car parking in the vicinity of the appeal site; and the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and on the streetscene.

Reasons

Car Parking

4. The appeal property is a modern three storey, three bedroom terraced dwelling, which is situated within a densely built residential estate. The proposal is to construct a dormer roof extension on the rear of the property. Off-street parking provision is available on private driveways on the fronts of properties, or in shared courtyards. In addition to driveways, some properties also have integral garages. The appeal dwelling originally had a garage, but this has recently been converted into living accommodation. Planning permission was granted for the conversion in May 2015. Part of the Council's reasoning for that approval was that the garage was too small to accommodate a vehicle. As a result, the appeal property has only one off-street parking space.
-

5. The appeal site is situated relatively close to the main town centre of Borehamwood. Consequently, there is good access to public transport and, in addition, a wide range of services and community facilities are accessible on foot or by cycle. In such locations, the Council can accept a reduction in its car parking standards of between 50–100%, subject to justification. The Council's approach to parking provision is contained in Policy CS25 of the Adopted Core Strategy 2013 (CS) and in its Supplementary Planning Document – Parking Standards 2014 (SPD). In addition, Policy SADM41 of the SADM requires new development to provide parking in accordance with both the CS and the SPD.
6. The appeal proposal would create an additional bedroom in the dwelling. The Council states that a four bedroom dwelling would require 3 off-street spaces. However, this could be reduced in line with the Council's standards if justified.
7. Notwithstanding the above, it was evident during my site visit (which took place early on a midweek afternoon), that a significant amount of vehicles were parked on the public highway along Chaucer Grove, Keats Close and on other neighbouring streets. Some of these vehicles were parked partly on the footways causing an obstruction to pedestrians. This indicates to me that, notwithstanding the proximity of the site to the town centre and public transport routes, there is a relatively high level of car usage in the area, with a high demand for parking provision. I also note that concerns over parking issues have been expressed by the occupiers of other properties near to the appeal site.
8. There has been some debate between the parties over the number of bedrooms and habitable rooms at the property and the use of the former garage. However, it is clear from the submitted plans that the dwelling would have four bedrooms as a result of the development. Consequently, I conclude that the Council's normal parking requirement would be for 3 off-street spaces. I note that the additional bedroom is proposed for the appellant's children and, therefore, there may not be the need for additional parking at the current time. However, in my opinion it is not unreasonable to conclude that a larger property would have the potential to increase occupancy and to result in an increase in associated vehicles.
9. The appellant points to the availability of parking space in close proximity to the appeal site. However, given the evidence before me and my observations during my site visit, I am not persuaded that a reduction in the Council's parking requirements would be justified in this case or that further on-street parking should be encouraged. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would increase the likelihood of on-street parking in the vicinity of the appeal site. This would be potentially hazardous and inconvenient to other road users and pedestrians and would conflict with the provisions and intentions of Policy CS25 of the CS and with the Council's SPD, as referred to above.

Character and Appearance

10. The appeal property is part of a terrace of four dwellings. The terrace is situated on the corner of Chaucer Grove and Keats Close, with the rear roof slope being clearly visible and prominent from Keats Close. The roof of the terrace is presently unaltered, as are the majority of roofs on the estate.

11. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document – Guidelines for Residential Extensions and Alterations 2006 (SPD), advises that dormer windows should be as small as possible, located on the rear of dwellings and take up no more than 60% of the roof slope. The SPD also states that dormers should be at least 0.3m lower than the ridge of the roof and set-in from the sides by at least 0.5m. The appellant contends that the proposal accords with the provisions of the SPD, although the Council states that the dormer would be less than 0.3m below the ridge.
12. Notwithstanding the contents of the SPD, its provisions act as guidance only and each case must be considered on its merits. In my opinion, the proposal would appear as a bulky and dominant feature on the rear roof slope because of its overall width and height. It would also appear as an awkward and incongruous addition because of its close proximity to the flat-roofed top of the existing second floor windows on the rear of the property and also because it would be wider than the flat-roofed window structure. The proposed dormer would also disrupt the integrity of the roofscape of the terrace as a whole. I acknowledge that the dormer would only be viewed by a limited number of people along Keats Close. Nevertheless, this does not alter my findings.
13. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal property and to the streetscene. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS22 of the CS and with Policy SADM31 of the SADM, which (amongst other things) requires high quality design and for development to make a positive contribution to the built environment. The proposal would also fail to accord with paragraphs 17 and 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which has similar objectives.
14. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account examples of other dormer extensions on properties in the vicinity of the appeal site. Of these, the extensions at numbers 65 Coleridge Way and 3 Shelley Close do not appear to be clearly visible from public viewpoints. The existing dormer structure at number 28 Keats Close is more visible in the streetscene, but the existing property is a different house type and design. In any event, I have determined the appeal proposal on its own merits.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR