

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2017

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/D/16/3161964
133 Mayfield Road, Southampton, SO17 3SY.

- 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 Rezazdeh against the decision of Southampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01280/FUL dated 22 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed two storey front extension, single/two storey rear extensions, alterations/additional windows on front, side and rear elevations with raised decking to rear (amendment to approved application reference 15/01206/FUL for first floor front element).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the proposed two storey front extension. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to single/two storey rear extensions, alterations/additional windows on front, side and rear elevations with raised decking to rear at 133 Mayfield Road, Southampton, SO17 3SY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/01280/FUL dated 22 July 2016 and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted: 2015/01 and 2015/02 .
 - 3) The external materials to be used in the construction of the rear extensions and alterations hereby permitted shall match those of the host dwelling.
 - 4) Prior to the commencement of works on the decking hereby permitted, details of privacy screening to be installed to the sides of the decking, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The screens shall be installed before the decking first comes into use and thereafter retained as approved.
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- 5) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order), no doors shall be inserted above ground floor level in the side elevations of the two storey rear extension hereby permitted without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the host building and the street scene.

Reasons

3. The Appeal site is located within the western part of Mayfield Road, which is characterised by pairs of traditional uniformly designed semi-detached dwellings, with occasional small terraces and a school. The dwellings are constructed from a limited range of designs and materials. It includes pairs of simple flat fronted two storey dwellings under shallow pitched fully hipped roofs and similarly designed pairs of dwellings with dominant centrally located twin front gable projections. These projecting gables are comparatively narrow and stretch across less than half the frontage of the properties concerned.
4. The dwellings within the eastern part of Mayfield Road are more varied and articulated in their form and design. As a result the character of the eastern and western parts of Mayfield Road are quite distinct and the two parts are physically separated by Woodcote Road.
5. Some of the dwellings in the western part of Mayfield Road have been extended at ground floor level, although the extensions are subservient to the host buildings and the original form and appearance of the pairs of dwellings is readily identifiable. At the same time the ground floor extensions are partially screened at ground floor level by boundary walls, fences and soft landscaping and so do not materially detract from the sense of rhythm and uniformity within the street scene. This sense of rhythm is reinforced by the staggered building lines which follow a set pattern on both sides of the road.
6. There have also been a number of first floor front extensions in Mayfield Road as a whole, which are typically subordinate to the host dwelling. However, they do serve to highlight that first floor front extensions can detract from the symmetry of the host buildings and can materially undermine the sense of rhythm within the street scene.
7. It is noted that there are two dwellings with front projecting hipped roof projections in Mayfield Road. However they are located alongside road junctions and have limited impact on the sense of rhythm within the street scene.
8. Amongst other things the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), policies SDP1 (i), SDP7(iii)(iv) & SDP9(i)(v) of the Southampton Local Plan Review Document 2015 (Local Plan) and policy CS13 of the adopted Southampton Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010)(DPD) seek to ensure that new development adds to the quality of the area. Proposals should respect the existing layout of buildings within the

streetscape, reflect the identity, respond positively and integrate with their local surroundings. New development should not affect the amenity of the city and should respect their surroundings in terms of visual impact.

9. At the same time the NPPF seeks to optimise the development potential of sites and states that planning policies and decisions should not stifle innovation or initiative. Architectural styles and tastes should not be imposed although it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.
10. Planning permission was granted for the proposed rear extension and a single storey front extension in 2015, reference 15/01206/FUL. The Council has confirmed that the only difference between the approved and proposed scheme is the addition of a first floor over the approved single storey front elevation.
11. The proposed rear extension would blend in appropriately with the rear extension of the adjoining dwelling at 135 Mayfield Road (No.135). It would benefit from the spacious and varied character of the rear garden environment and would be partially screened by the extension at No.135. Overall this element of the proposal would respect and blend in appropriately with the host building and the surrounding area, whilst optimising the development potential of the site.
12. The Council has suggested the imposition of conditions which require the use of matching external materials; the provision of privacy screens and adherence to the submitted drawings. These conditions would be necessary to ensure the rear extension and decking respected the materials used in the host building, to protect the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent dwellings and in the interests of certainty. It is noted that such conditions were imposed on the existing approved scheme for these reasons.
13. The Council has also suggested a condition which would prevent the insertion of any first floor windows or doors in the side elevations of the resultant dwelling. I find that this condition is unnecessary in relation to new windows. This is because the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 prevents the insertion of any windows above ground floor level unless they are obscure glazed and non-opening. However, it would be appropriate to include a condition which prevents the insertion of any doors above ground floor level as their provision could result in a loss of privacy for the occupiers of the adjacent properties.
14. The proposed front extension would project across more than 50% of the front elevation to the host dwelling and project some three metres into the front garden. It would totally dominate the host dwelling, unbalance the pair of dwellings and intrude into the well balanced staggered building line between the host dwelling and the gable fronted dwelling at 131 Mayfield Road (No.131). This would be particularly noticeable because the dwelling at No.131 sits at a lower level than the Appeal dwelling. Further, the harm that would result from the front extension could not be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of conditions.
15. As a result of these factors the proposed front extension would materially detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the pair of dwellings and would interrupt and undermine the sense of rhythm within the street scene. It would be contrary to the Council's Residential Design Guide –

Part 2 – Final approved version 2006 (RDG). The RDG advises that extensions should be subordinate to the original dwelling and should not visually unbalance a dwelling, or break the visual continuity of the street scene.

16. The harm that would be caused by the proposed front extension would outweigh the benefits for the Appellant and his family that would result from the proposed additional accommodation. In addition, although it is noted that no objections have been raised by local residents, this does not outweigh the harm identified above.
17. I conclude that the proposed rear extension would respect the character and appearance of the host building and would blend in readily with the rear garden environment. It would therefore comply with policies SDP1 (i), SDP7(iii)(iv) & SDP9(i)(v) of the Local Plan), policy CS13 of the DPD, the RDG and the NPPF. Conversely the proposed front extension would materially and unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the pair of dwellings and the street scene, contrary to the above policies and guidance. As the proposed rear and front extensions are physically and functionally separate it is possible to issue a split decision.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR