
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 December 2016

by Paul Singleton BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4625/D/16/3159393

149 Haslucks Green Road, Shirley, Solihull B90 2LG

- 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 Mrs T Akhtar against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2016/01841/MINFHO, dated 12 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of two storey side and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area centred on Haslucks Green Road and Haslucks Croft.

Reasons

3. Although there is some variation in architectural style and detailing Haslucks Green Road is characterised a continuous frontage of semi-detached houses in red brick and render with tiled hipped roofs. Two storey bay or bow windows are a dominant feature of the properties fronting the road. Many of the houses have been extended with 2 storey side additions but, in most cases, a subservient relationship with the host building has been achieved by means of setting back the extension from the front façade of the original house and/or the use of a reduced ridge height to the roof of the extension.
 4. The two storey extension which has already been added to the appeal property has been constructed flush with the façade of the original house at both the ground and first floor level, extending the mono pitch roof over the front porch. The hipped roof has also been extended with the same ridge height as that of the original house. With the width of the existing addition equating to almost half of that of the original house this addition has resulted in a significant increase in the massing and bulk of the property and a visual imbalance in the pair of semi-detached properties as the neighbouring house has not been extended and has only a single storey garage to the side.
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5. The proposed 2 storey extension would also be flush with the existing façade at ground and first floor levels and would extend the existing roof ridge height by approximately 3 metres (m). The proposed addition would significantly increase the massing and bulk of the appeal property and result in the dwelling being more than twice the width of the house as originally constructed. The proposal would further exacerbate the existing visual imbalance between the appeal property and its immediate neighbour.
6. The proposal would also result in the creation of a flat façade, at both ground and first floor level, of over 8m in length along the front elevation of the house and in the loss of the visual break currently provided by the driveway to the side. Together these changes would cause a harmful interruption to the existing rhythm provided by the regular siting of the semi-detached properties, their ridge lines and roof hips, their 2 storey bay or bow windows and the gaps in between each pair of houses. In my judgement the proposal would result in a very large property which would be discordant and incongruous in the existing street scene along Haslucks Green Road.
7. I note the appellant's reference to the 2 storey addition at number 247 Haslucks Green Road but do not accept that this sets any precedent for what may be regarded as acceptable at the appeal property. Although the same roof detailing has not been replicated that addition closely reflects the footprint and massing of the side addition to its immediate neighbour at number 245 and does not have the same adverse effect on the rhythm and balance of properties within the street scene that the appeal proposal would have.
8. The appeal property is one of four corner properties standing gable end on to the side road that forms the entrance to Haslucks Croft. The main 2 storey components of all of these properties are currently set back behind the back of the pavement by a significant margin with their boundaries defined mainly by medium height (around 1.8m) timber fencing and boundary vegetation. The proposal would involve the construction of a blank elevation on the side boundary of the appeal property of over 11m in length which would be of considerable height even in that section which would form the side wall to the single storey rear addition. No strong building line exists on this side road but the creation of a hard edge along such a length of the roadside boundary would substantially diminish the open feeling which currently exists at all four corners of this section of Haslucks Croft.
9. For these reasons I find that the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance both of the host property as one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings and of the area focused on Haslucks Green Road and Haslucks Croft. The proposal would conflict Policy P15 of the Solihull Local Plan (2013) which states that all development proposals will be expected to achieve good quality design which conserves and enhances local character and streetscape and ensures that the scale and massing of the development respect the surrounding built environment. It would also conflict with the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'House Extension Guidelines' (2010) that extensions should be designed to integrate with the style and character of the existing dwelling and that, where space permits, consideration should be given to the retention of a side passageway in order to give the dwelling a setting within its own plot.

10. The appellant comments that the SPD was prepared in connection with the former rather than the current Local Plan but this does not of itself mean that it should be discounted. The basic requirements of the SPD, that extensions should be designed to integrate with the style and character of the host property, are consistent with the policies set out in section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework with regard to requiring good design and I see no reason not to give full weight to the SPD.

Other Matters

11. The appellant contends that the medical condition of two of her children should be taken into account in the determination of the appeal and has submitted correspondence from the health professionals treating the children. However, none of the information set out in that correspondence directly supports the appellant's claim that there is an essential need for the additional bedrooms proposed in order to help alleviate the medical conditions which these children have. Accordingly I find no evidence that the personal circumstances of the appellant are such as to outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Singleton

INSPECTOR