

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2017

by Julia Gregory BSc (Hons), BTP, MRTPI, MCMI

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

Decision date: 13th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/16/3165175
14 Watling Knoll, Radlett WD7 7HW

- 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 A Desai against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/1904/HSE, dated 28 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 29 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and rear extensions incorporating a single storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for two storey side and rear extensions incorporating a single storey front extension at 14 Watling Knoll, Radlett WD7 7HW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/1904/HSE, dated 28 September 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 12485-P001-E.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the streetscene.

Reasons

3. No 14 is one of a pair of semi-detached two storey dwellinghouses on a short stretch of Watling Knoll, a residential spur road running parallel with Watling Street.
 4. The street scene comprises principally Nos 11 to 18 since Watling Knoll finishes at No 18 and in the other direction No 10 is a detached property at the junction of where the access joins Watling Street. Then properties are set on a slightly different more forward building line.
 5. Of the properties Nos 10 to 18, five have been extended at the side with two storey extensions. Most notable of these are Nos 15, 16, 17 and 18 because they are similar to the appeal property.
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6. The appeal scheme would be similar to that next door at No 15. It would reflect the hip of the existing main roof and the fenestration style of the dwelling. There is little to differentiate the appeal scheme from those extensions further along Watling Knoll since they are similar in width and height and have similar relationships with their boundaries. The extension at No 14 would represent the fifth property in a row with such an extension.
7. I acknowledge that side extensions can have a visually intrusive effect, but given that the extension would be set on the same building line as its neighbours which are similarly extended with a similar amount of side isolation retained, this would instead accord with its immediate surroundings.
8. Furthermore, although symmetry would be affected by extending No 14 when No 13 is not similarly extended, the eye would not be readily drawn to this mismatch. This is firstly because of the next 4 properties being similarly extended and secondly because the property is set on a regular line on the spur road with the main footpath on Watling Street being separated by a grass verge.
9. Although the gap to the boundary would be only 0.9m and the overall gap to No 15 would be less than 2m, I note that the Hertsmere Planning Design Guide SPD is draft and therefore this limits substantially the weight that I can attribute its guidance. Because of the number of side extensions in the locality, the short streetscene is not characterised by sky gaps and the development would not have a materially adverse effect on the character and appearance of the streetscene.
10. I acknowledge that the contents of the Council's Planning and Design Guide Part E Guidance for residential extensions and alterations, which is adopted as supplementary planning guidance, would be contravened to some extent. Nonetheless, for the reasons that I have already given, in all the circumstances, I conclude that the development would not have an uncomfortable relationship with its neighbours and would fit in with its surroundings.
11. My conclusions are consistent with that of another Inspector in respect of the scheme at No 17, albeit I note that he considered the proposal in a different policy context.¹ Furthermore it would be consistent with the Council's own decision in respect of the extension at No 18 determined in 2013, again determined against earlier policies.²
12. I conclude that the development would not conflict with Policy CS22 of the Hertsmere Local Plan Development Plan Document Hertsmere Local Plan Core Strategy which seeks high quality design. It would comply with policy SADM30 of the Adopted Hertsmere Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan which identifies that development should recognise and complement the local character of the area and achieve a high quality of design. It would comply with the requirement for good design in the National Planning Policy Framework.
13. As far as planning conditions are concerned, plans should be specified in the interests of the proper planning of the area and for the avoidance of doubt. Matching materials are required in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

¹ APP/N1920/A/00/1040282 dated 5 July 2000

² Council reference 03/07/2013

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Julia Gregory

Inspector