

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2017

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DiP TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/17/3168735

56A Deeds Grove, High Wycombe HP12 3NU

- 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 Hussain against the decision of Wycombe District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/07198/FUL, dated 5 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'amendment to previous planning refusal Ref: 16/06431/FUL – construction of part two storey, part single storey side extension. Amendments include reduction in width of the proposed extension. Extension is to be deeper at the rear.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background

2. A part two storey, part single storey side extension at the site was previously allowed at appeal. An amended scheme was permitted (ref: 15/08005/FUL) ('approved scheme'), but has not been implemented. A further application for a side extension, described by the Council as wider but shorter, was refused (ref: 16/06431/FUL). The application the subject of this appeal was then submitted.
3. In reaching my decision I have had regard to the site's planning history, although I do not have full details of all the schemes. However, I have also dealt with this appeal on its merits, and against relevant development plan policies.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area; ii) whether the proposal would afford the occupants of the host property with suitable living conditions, with particular regard to useable outdoor space; and iii) whether the proposal would result in poor living conditions at no. 58 Deeds Grove, with particular regard to the outlook from that property.
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Reasons

Character and appearance

5. This part of Deeds Grove is broadly characterised by a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings which are set back from the highway behind front gardens and hardstanding areas. The gardens, together with the set back of the dwellings, help to give the area a fairly spacious and landscaped ambience.
6. No. 56A is a detached dwelling, which is set back from the road. It is prominently sited at the end of a row, on the inside of a tight bend, and opposite a short cul-de-sac flanked by areas of open space. Between its narrow gable and the highway there is an open level area, along with conifers on higher ground close to the pavement. It is in part of that level area that the approved scheme would be sited, and where this scheme is now proposed.
7. Although the appellant states that this scheme would be only 0.4m wider than the approved scheme, its front face relative to the host property's front face would be fairly wide. Consequently, although the extension's eaves and ridge lines would be set down, as was previously approved, its form would be rather elongated and squat compared to the greater verticality in the host; and although the extension's front face would be set back, it would not appear entirely subservient.
8. On this wedge-shaped plot, the extension's front corner would be very close to the highway. In that position, the scheme, in this prominent location, would jar with the prevailing characteristic of buildings set well back from the road. The extension would also project significantly further to the rear than the host property. Although it would have a lower ridge line, given the length of its flank wall and roof, its side elevation would not be clearly subservient to the original building. Notwithstanding changes in levels and the conifers, that long side elevation would be very apparent in streetscene views from the south.
9. Although the Council expresses concerns regarding increased pressure to fell the remaining conifers, the appellant maintains that they would not need to be removed. From my on-site observations, whether or not they would remain, those conifers currently form a short, dense screen, rather than being of any particular townscape significance or quality. For the above reasons, I do however share the Council's more general concern that the scheme would appear over-dominant and cramped in the streetscene.
10. Having regard to the site's planning history, there are therefore material differences between the approved scheme and this proposal which would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the area.
11. Policy G3 of the Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 (2007) ('LP'), and policy CS 19 of the Wycombe Core Strategy 2008 ('WCS') set out, amongst other things and in broad terms, that development shall respect its local urban context and reinforce its character. LP policy H17 (and Appendix 4), require that house extensions should not adversely affect the character and appearance of the host and area, and should be subservient to the original dwelling, whilst complementing and visually integrating with it. For the reasons above the scheme would conflict with those requirements.

12. Although the Council's decision also refers to LP policy G11 and WCS policy CS 17, as the conifers are not of good quality or a significant environmental asset, there would be no conflict with them.

Living conditions at no. 56A

13. Given the site's dimensions and levels, the Council considers that, should the extension be allowed, it would leave inadequate outdoor space for the occupants, thereby resulting in poor living conditions. For his part the appellant calculates that the amount of low level garden within the retaining walls would be in the region of 80sqm.
14. I observed on my site visit that, as well as steeper sections of garden, a relatively level area of lawn immediately to the rear of the host would remain. I am satisfied that the amenity area would be of sufficient quantity and quality to provide the occupants of the enlarged house with useable space to sit outside, hang washing, or to perform other typical domestic outdoor tasks.
15. Consequently, on this issue, the scheme would not conflict with those parts of LP policies G8 and H19 (including Appendix 1), and WCS policy CS19 which state that proposals should safeguard amenity, and provide appropriate private environments, with useable and accessible outdoor amenity space.

Living conditions at no. 58

16. Although the extension would project beyond the rear of the host property, there would remain a reasonable gap to the side elevation of no. 58. Moreover, given that no. 58 is sited on much higher ground, and as the extension would have a hipped roof form which would limit the bulk of its rear elevation, the scheme would not have a significant overbearing impact when viewed from no. 58's side facing windows.
17. As a result, the scheme would not conflict with the requirements of LP policies H17 and G8, or WCS policy CS19, to protect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and provide appropriate private environments.

Conclusion

18. Although I have found on the second and third issues that there would not be significant harm, for the above reasons the scheme would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area. Consequently, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR