
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2017

by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/17/3168555

11 Highams Hill, Gossops Green, Crawley RH11 8BW

- 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 C Jones against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref CR/2016/0812/FUL, dated 16 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of single storey side extension to create self contained annexe accommodation, and increase the height of the boundary wall to 2 metres in height. (Amended description).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. For the sake of clarity I have used the description of development as set out on the Council's decision notice and on the appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of No 11 Highams Hill and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within a residential area. The house is an end of terrace property and the houses in the terrace are simple in their design, and include features such as tile hanging and pitched roofs. The house is prominent in the street scene as it is located on a corner plot, and on land that slopes with the house set above the road on Highams Hill.
 5. I have been referred to the Council's Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2016. This refers to extensions relating appropriately to the parent dwelling's character and style, dimensions, materials and finishes and also the character of the neighbourhood. The proposal would incorporate a flat roof extension and it is also proposed to replace the boundary wall along the boundary with Hillmead.
 6. I accept that the depth of the extension was necessary to meet minimum requirements for a single occupier with movement space for a wheelchair if needed. I note that the flat roof was incorporated with the intention to reduce the prominence of the extension. I acknowledge that flat roofs are found in the
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area although this is mainly in respect of garage blocks and flatted development.

7. However, from the front elevation in particular the roof and design of the extension would draw the eye. Although only 1 metre wider than the house this would be sufficient to result in the front elevation being out of scale with the existing dwelling. The placement and design of the windows on the front elevation would also be out of character. In addition, due to the slope and width of the proposed extension it would be a highly dominant feature in the street scene even with retained and additional soft landscaping in the garden. The extension would replace an existing car port which can be seen from the road. However, this is constructed in wood and does not have a significant presence in the street scene. In contrast the proposed extension would be higher and have a greater bulk than the car port and other extensions in the area. It would appear significantly out of context with the proportions of the main dwelling and in respect of the terrace.
8. With the replacement boundary wall in place the extension would be less prominent when seen from Hillmead and the lantern rooflight would not be a significant feature. The pavement and road adjoining the wall is an open and spacious area and this would ensure that the wall would not appear overbearing to pedestrians walking along Hillmead. Other high boundaries are also found within the area. The proposed boundary would therefore be acceptable in this context, and it would provide additional security and privacy for the occupiers of the property on this exposed corner plot. The materials to be used in the extension would be appropriate in the context of the variety found in the area. However, these matters are not sufficient reason to outweigh the harm I have found.
9. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of No 11 Highams Hill and the surrounding area. It would be in conflict with Policies CH2 and CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015. These amongst other things seek new development that respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, and be of high quality in terms of their urban, landscape and architectural design. It would be contrary to the SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework where it relates to the need for high quality design.

Other matters

10. The Council does not raise any objection to the proposal in terms of its effect on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers or in respect of the changes to the parking provision. Based on the evidence before me I see no reason to disagree with these matters. However, this is not sufficient to justify the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

11. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide accommodation for an elderly relative and that the extension could provide flexible accommodation for the family in the future. The site is in an accessible location. These factors have limited weight in favour of the scheme. However, I have found that the scheme would cause harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area, and this would outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

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

L Gibbons

INSPECTOR