

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 April 2017

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/D/17/3169369

Watermans Cottage, School Lane, Hamble-Le-Rice SO31 4JD

- 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 Kevin Saw against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
 - The application Ref F/16/79307 was refused by notice dated 22 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'Resubmission as permitted application F/16/78701 with the addition of accommodation above the garage and conversion of two ground floor bedrooms to a bedsitting room and additional parking on permeable paving.'
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the character and appearance of the host building and locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal concerns one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings that are set back from School Lane. They are reached by a private drive that approaches the eastern side of Watermans Cottage. The properties face towards a churchyard to the north and in other directions there are dwellings of fairly varied design. The pair of semis are characterised by distinctive central first floor elements with single storey parts to the sides. They are not identical but there is an attractive degree of similarity in terms of matters such as scale, form, bulk and some aspects of detailing. The proposal would include a two storey extension, partly in the position of the existing garage and this is the part of the overall development that the Council contests.
 4. The extension would have a mansard style form, similar to that of the existing first floor element, that would itself be extended rearwards, while also having a lower ridge. However, its ridge would be significantly above the eaves level of the central feature, with the form adding to the bulk by comparison to a simple pitched roof. Moreover, the length of this new first floor part across the front and rear would be substantially greater than those dimensions of the central upper floor elements. At the rear it would partly overlap the extended existing
-

feature and to the eastern side project beyond the end of the single storey WC extension.

5. In consequence, rather than being subordinate, the extension would be excessive in its scale and bulk, being overly dominant and unduly competing with the central first floor features. Such a relatively large first floor part would be disproportionate to the predominant single storey scale of the dwellings. The addition would also, as a result, unbalance the pair of dwellings and undermine their similarities.
6. The extension would be significantly higher than that previously approved by the Council in this position. The permitted addition would have its top just below that of the eaves of the central first floor part, as shown in the drawing included in the Design and Access Statement (DAS). As a result of being significantly higher, as well as its mansard form, the extension now proposed would be appreciably bulkier. In relation to the existing garage the increase in scale and bulk would be even greater. The enlargement in this case would be of a lesser scale than that the subject of the previous appeal at this site. However, this does not, in itself, confer acceptability and I must consider this scheme on its own merits.
7. It is accepted that the properties would not readily be seen from the public realm but the previous appeal at this site was dismissed on design grounds despite the Inspector acknowledging the limited public exposure of the host dwelling. The Appellant suggests that there would be little opportunity to see the existing and new first floor elements in conjunction and I have carefully considered the analysis of views put forward. Nevertheless, standing at the front of Watermans Cottage towards the eastern end of the front garden, the somewhat incongruous presence of the new first floor part in the context of the predominantly single storey pair of dwellings and central first floor features would be readily apparent, projecting above and beyond the WC extension.
8. The adverse impact would also be appreciated on a sequential basis when entering the site and approaching the front of either of the properties. The distinctive dominance of the existing first floor parts and sense of balance can also be appreciated at the rear. In consequence, the detrimental effect would also be apparent to anyone using the rear gardens of the semis and to occupiers of the nearby dwellings to the south of the appeal site. In any event, the suggestion that acceptability should be conferred on the basis of restricted visibility seems to me to represent an implicit acknowledgement of the inappropriate nature of the development.
9. As a result of these factors it is concluded that the character and appearance of the host building and the locality would be harmed. There would be conflict with Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review Policy 59.BE and Revised Pre-submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Policy DM1. These intend, amongst other things, to ensure that development should be appropriate in its mass, scale and design, takes full and proper account of the site context, would not have an unacceptable impact on character and appearance and, where possible, should enhance such matters.

Other considerations

10. Occupiers of the adjacent properties have raised concerns about the effect on their living conditions with regard to matters such as privacy, outlook and noise.

However, due to matters such as the potential to use obscured glazing in the bathroom windows, the distances involved and the form of the scheme there would be no unacceptable impact in these respects. Objections have been raised in relation to the visual impact of the proposed car parking, the resultant loss of vegetation and the useability of the spaces. However, the Council points out that the hardstanding could be constructed using permitted development rights anyway.

11. I have considered the impact of the scheme in relation to the adjacent churchyard and Church of St Andrews, a grade II listed building, and to the adjacent Hamble Conservation Area. Because of the form of the development and the degree of separation there would be no harmful effect in these respects.
12. It is indicated in the DAS that the development would include accommodation for Mrs Saw's father who is said to be unwell and a teenage son. However, there is no detailed evidence on these matters and the development would be achieved at the undue expense of the quality of the built environment. I therefore consider that rejecting the appeal would be both proportionate and necessary given the harm that would result.
13. I am reinforced in my view regarding the adverse impact and unacceptable nature of the development by the importance placed on design in the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework). It is a core principle of the Framework that planning should always seek to secure high quality design. It is also indicated in the Framework that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning, which would not be achieved in this instance.

Conclusion

14. Given the harm that would result and taking account of all other matters raised, there are no other considerations sufficient, in themselves or cumulatively, to justify accepting the development. It is therefore determined that the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR