
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 May 2017

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 23rd June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/17/3173477
55 Hazelwood Drive, St Albans AL4 0UP

- 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 & Mrs Harrison against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/17/0089, dated 13 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 8 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is a front porch extension with pitched dormer over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and wider area.

Reasons

3. Hazelwood Drive between Central Drive and Elm Drive consists mainly of two storey semi-detached properties that can be grouped into different architectural styles. The appeal site at No 55 forms part of a group of properties that can be seen along much of the west side of this section of Hazelwood Drive, but also exists on the east side nearest to Elm Drive and an isolated pair at Nos 74 and 76. These properties have a prominent two storey front gable with timber detailing. Most have a cat slide roof that link each pair of properties and extends down to the front door.
 4. On the east side of this section of Hazelwood Road, most properties do not have the prominent front gable or cat slide roof, but have a simpler hipped roof design with two storey front bay windows. They are quite separate in design terms to the appeal property. Thus, I have not given much weight to any alterations to these properties.
 5. There have been alterations to the group of properties within which the appeal site sits including replacement windows and doors, porches beneath the cat slide roof, side extensions and modern bay windows on the ground floor section of the front gable. However, the front gable and the cat slide roof design remain largely unaltered for the majority of properties and present a prominent, consistent and highly distinctive feature in the Hazelwood Drive street scene. The appeal property is largely unaltered at the front apart from
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an infill porch under the cat slide roof. Although there is vegetation in front of No 55, the cat slide roof and front gable are visible from the road and pavement.

6. The proposed development would seek to replicate the design of the existing front gable and would utilise sympathetic materials. However, due to its size and siting, the dormer would obscure much of the cat slide roof and be attached to the existing front gable. While set back from the front gable, it would still be clearly visible in the street scene as a cramped addition. As such, it would detract from the prominence and consistency of the front gable and cat slide roof that characterises this property and the group of properties to which it belongs. Given the number and uniformity of these properties, it would be difficult to resist the same development elsewhere which would result in further harm to the character and appearance of the area.
7. In terms of the planning permissions granted at two other properties on Hazelwood Drive as highlighted by the appellant, the front dormer at No 74 is detached from the front gable with more of the cat slide roof visible and utilises different detailing and materials. The front dormer at No 69 is smaller and on the outside of the main front gable, with the cat slide roof between it and No 71 largely unaltered. They are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal and do not justify the harm that the proposal would cause.
8. In conclusion, the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and wider area. Therefore, it would not accord with Policies 69 and 72 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 which require development to take account of the character of its surroundings, be compatible with the original building and avoid an adverse cumulative effect. It would also not meet the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires good design that responds to local character.

Conclusion

9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR