

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2017

by J Gilbert MA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 03rd July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/17/3170560

31 Wingfield Road, Bromham, Bedfordshire MK43 8JY

- 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 Antony Farr against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/03440/FUL, dated 22 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is single storey front extension, two storey side extension, first floor rear extension over part of existing flat roofed rear extension and addition of cladding to part front and rear elevations
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey front extension, two storey side extension, first floor rear extension over part of existing flat roofed rear extension and addition of cladding to part front and rear elevations at 31 Wingfield Road, Bromham, Bedfordshire MK43 8JY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/03440/FUL, dated 22 November 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 approved plans: 002 (V01); 003 (V02); P002 (V03); P001 (V04).
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials listed on the planning application form.
 - 4) The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the windows at first floor level in the side elevation have been fitted with obscured glazing in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and no part of any window that is less than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which it is installed shall be capable of being opened. The windows shall be retained in this form throughout the lifetime of the development.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council used a revised description of the development on its decision notice. However, the description provided on the planning application form is satisfactory and I see no reason to change it.
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Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Wingfield Road and neighbouring Woodland Drive are characterised by two-storey semi-detached houses of a similar design with pitched roofs running parallel to the road. There are existing two storey side extensions to a number of houses on both streets, not all of which are subservient to the host dwelling or situated on corner plots. Although the properties are generally set back from the back edge of the footpath, some properties are positioned further forward than the adjacent properties to address the roads' bends.
5. Design Code E1 of the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments (2000)(the SPG) refers to extensions stepping down and back to appear secondary to the host property in most situations. The proposed extension follows the existing house's roofline and does not step down and back from the frontage. The Council is concerned that this would unbalance the appearance of the pair of semi-detached properties within the street scene. However, given the need to set the extension off the shared boundary, the proposed extension is so narrow that setting it back to create a distinct element would not be successful in design terms and would result in an addition which would not sit comfortably with the main house. Furthermore, the semi-detached houses have already been altered by existing side and front extensions to No 29, which unbalances their appearance. I do not consider that the proposed development would detrimentally affect this relationship or the character of the area.
6. The proposed two storey side extension would be set in from the boundary with No 33 by about 0.9 metre which falls short of the 1.5 metre separation distance sought by Design Code E3 of the SPG.
7. However, such guidance must be applied with regard to the particular circumstances of the case. Here, the staggered layout of Nos 31 and 33 means that much of the gable wall of No 31 would remain visible on long views down the street as it is now. In these circumstances, the 0.9 metre gap between the proposed extension and the boundary would ensure an adequate sense of separation and there would be no terracing effect.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed two storey extension would not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposed development would be compliant with saved Policy BE30 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002 and Policy CP21 of the adopted Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan 2008. These intend, amongst other matters, to ensure a high standard of design that reinforces local distinctiveness and has an appropriate interaction with public space. These policies reflect those principles of the National Planning Policy Framework that seek to ensure developments respect local character.

Other Matters

9. The Council makes reference to the provision of car parking on the site's frontage, which would limit pedestrian access to the house, and cycle access to

the rear garden and garage. However, this was not given as a reason for refusing planning permission and, having considered the details set out in the officer's report on the matter, this consideration does not lead me to any different conclusion on the appeal.

Conditions

10. I have imposed a condition requiring obscured glazing to some windows in order to prevent harmful overlooking of the neighbouring property at No 33.
11. In addition to this condition, I consider it necessary to specify conditions limiting the lifespan of the planning permission, confirming the approved plans and the materials for the proposed extensions. All of these conditions are required to provide certainty, with the condition on materials also ensuring that the appearance of the extensions is satisfactory.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, and taking into account all other relevant matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be allowed.

J Gilbert

INSPECTOR