
Appeal Decision

Site visits made on 9 October 2017 and 8 November 2017

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/17/3180576

37 Tuffnells Way, Harpenden AL5 3HA

- 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 Dew against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/17/0679, dated 9 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side and single storey front and rear extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Tuffnells Way is a residential street located towards the northern end of Harpenden. Properties on the road appear to be primarily detached and are designed in a variety of ways, with many of the properties extended. The street has a fairly spacious feel, enhanced by the size of the houses, the generous front gardens, mature landscaping and the space between and above the homes.
4. No 37 Tuffnells Way is located almost opposite to the junction of the street with Farm Avenue, and forms one half of a similarly designed pair of detached houses with No 35 Tuffnells Way. Both properties have a distinctive roofline, being sited gable on to the street with the right hand roof pitch finishing above the first floor and a long catslide roof terminating above the property's integral garages on the left hand side. The large first floor area of the gable façade is tile hung with buff bricks below.
5. The proposal seeks to significantly extend No 37, the effect of which would be to create a more conventionally styled property with a right hand gable. The roof form of the property would be altered substantially, changing from an asymmetrical pitched roof to a pitched roof with two gables to the left. At present the left hand side single storey wall of the house forms the boundary with No 35. There is a narrow passageway between the boundary and No 35 itself providing side access to the rear garden to this property.

6. Despite the subservient height of the gables to the main ridgeline, the proposal would effectively make this boundary wall two storeys high. This would visually enclose the side passageway between the extended property and the higher right hand side of No 35, marking a significant change from the wide open sky view that can currently be seen between the properties by virtue of the catslide roof of No 37.
7. Policies 69 and 72 of the Local Plan¹ together state that all development shall have an adequately high standard of design taking into account factors such as context, that extensions in residential areas shall relate to the character and appearance of the street, and that where the cumulative effect would lead to terracing of detached houses, extensions other than at ground floor level shall normally be a minimum of 1 metre from the party boundary.
8. In September 2014 permission was granted on appeal to demolish No 33 Tuffnells Way and build a new detached dwelling. This development was complete at the time of my visit, and has a 2 storey right elevation situated fairly close to No 35. The proposal in this case would lead to No 35 having two storey walls in fairly close proximity to both its left and right elevations, removing a large section of visible sky and cumulatively leading to a terracing effect, having an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the street.
9. The appellant considers that the reason for refusal only refers to the effect of the scheme if repeated. I agree that the reason for refusal is somewhat misleading in this respect. However, I note that the Officer's report considers that the proposal would result in the loss of the spacious feel of the street and would cause harm to the street scene. I agree with this view and consider that the size and mass of the proposed extension, when coupled with its proximity to No 35, would have an adverse effect on the street scene.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. The scheme would be contrary to policies 69 and 72 of the Local Plan. The proposal would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that as a core planning principle that planning should always seek to secure high quality design.
11. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR

¹ City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review, November 1994.