The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2018

by Helen O'Connor LLB MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th December 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/J1860/D/18/3205872
5 St Andrews Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 3PR

- 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 Wills against the decision of Malvern Hills District Council.
- The application Ref 17/01924/HP, dated 8 December 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 February 2018.
- The development proposed is an extension to the side and rear to connect to the existing conservatory/garden room.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling.

Reasons

3. St Andrews Road comprises predominantly residential properties exhibiting a variety of styles and materials, which together with the street trees create a pleasant and interesting street scene. Aside from Cameron Court, which is a modern construction of flats, there are a number of older properties along the eastern side of St Andrews Road that due to their fairly regular spacing and interesting detailing, such as prominent front bay windows, contribute positively to the character of the area. The appeal property is one such property, and forms one of a pair of well-balanced, semi-detached houses.

4. A two storey side extension is proposed that would connect to an existing single storey conservatory/garden room at the rear. The width of the ground floor element of the extension would be nearly as wide as the original dwelling. This would undermine the balanced proportions of the original house, and especially so given that it is one of a pair. The horizontal line created by the canopy roof and position of the integral garage door particularly emphasises this width, which would weaken the prominence of the ground floor bay window in the front elevation. In addition, the window to wall ratio at the first floor level of the proposal would be at odds with the proportions of the original building which results in an unsettling effect. The resulting impact would be particularly prominent given that it involves the front and most public elevation of the building.

5. In support of the proposal the appellant points to design changes made following an earlier planning application that was refused permission by the Council. However, in reaching the conclusion that the proposal would be harmful primarily due to the resulting width and proportions, I have determined the appeal on its own merits. The lack of harm to the living conditions of neighbours, and the absence of objections to the scheme from other parties does not outweigh this.

6. The appellant indicates that the footprint of the proposal reflects characteristics in evidence at Cameron Court and its associated garaging. However, the design and appearance of the appeal property has little in common with the adjacent modern block of flats which is of an entirely different scale, form and level of detailing. To take design cues from this adjacent building rather than the existing host building would therefore not reinforce the local distinctiveness of the appeal property nor integrate it successfully as one of a pair of semi-detached houses.

7. The appellant has brought my attention to other development in St Andrews Road. The closest of these developments to the appeal site is at 1 St Andrews Road, a detached property that appears to have an annexe extension of a significant width. This example rather serves to demonstrate my concern. However, its negative impact is limited by the fact that unlike the appeal proposal, it is only single storey and to a certain extent screened from public view by the existence of the front boundary hedge.

8. Both 64 and 76 St Andrews Road are detached houses located some distance from the appeal site. I do not know the circumstances of those cases or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration. Nevertheless, No 64 appears to have had a recent two storey side extension that due to its matching proportions and significant setting back into the site is broadly in keeping with the style of the original detached property. The appellant refers to an extensive wide ground floor extension at No 76, but this did not appear evident at my site visit. In any event Nos 64 and 76 are both detached properties that have a materially different character to the appeal site and when combined with the distance from it, they are of limited relevance as direct comparisons.

9. I have had regard to the appellant's desire to create a multi-generational home to suit the potential future circumstances of his family, and I understand that the design in part derives from the position of the existing conservatory/garden room. Whilst improved accommodation to the occupants of the appeal property would be a benefit, it does not outweigh the harm that would result to the front elevation of the property. General concerns are mentioned regarding crime and disorder, but I have seen little evidence to justify providing the integral garage in the specific manner proposed. Therefore, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling and as such would be contrary to policy SWDP21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, February 2016 which amongst other matters, requires development to respond to, and complement the surrounding buildings.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Helen O'Connor

Inspector