



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2019

by David Wyborn BSc(Hons), MPhil, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1110/D/19/3229072

10 Branscombe Close, St Thomas, Exeter, Devon EX4 1RW

- 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 Richard Walker against the decision of Exeter City Council.
 - The application Ref 18/1515/FUL, dated 13 April 2018, was refused by notice dated 19 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is to extend dwelling to make a two storey house.
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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 area.

Reasons

3. Branscombe Close consists predominantly of detached and semi-detached bungalows within this hillside location. There are a mix of styles, however, the bungalows tend to face the estate road, are set back behind generally open garden areas and have reasonably shallow sloping roofs.
4. 10 Branscombe Close is located at the end of a cul-de-sac and with its reasonably shallow sloping roof and palette of external materials is broadly consistent with the general mix of dwellings within the area. No 10 is located further up the slope than the two adjoining semi-detached bungalows, (Nos 6 and 8 Branscombe Close). The adjoining bungalows have a different design to No 10 and have their ridge running parallel with the road. Nevertheless, the combined appearance within this part of the street scene is typical of the general surroundings within Branscombe Close.
5. When viewed from within the adjoining parts of Branscombe Close, No 10 is seen in the immediate context of the other two bungalows, but also with a backdrop of some trees and the dwellings further up the slope in Nadder Park Road.
6. The proposal would add a first floor and a more steeply pitched roof over the existing ground floor of the bungalow. While the design in itself would not be objectionable, the height of the resulting building would be considerably taller than the existing bungalows lower down the slope. This height and bulk of additional built form would appear overly dominant in relation to these

- adjoining buildings. The scheme would contrast starkly with the scale and form of the neighbouring bungalows and would not integrate sympathetically with the general character and appearance of the adjoining area.
7. The location at the top of the cul-de-sac and the backdrop of trees and properties in Nadder Park Road would not offset this harm due to the close visual relationship No 10 has with the adjoining two bungalows and because the scheme would be at odds with the generally consistent appearance of the cul-de-sac.
 8. Consequently, the proposal would not meet the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requirements that development should add to the overall quality of the area and establish and maintain a strong sense of place. The scheme would also conflict with the general approach in the Householder's Guide to Extension Design Supplementary Planning Document (September 2008) (the Extension Design SPD), in particular in respect of the general principles concerning scale and massing, and street scene.
 9. The case is made that it would be possible to erect substantial extensions under permitted development rights which it is explained may be less sympathetic in character than the present proposal, and potentially affect adjoining living conditions of neighbours. Furthermore, alternative schemes have been discussed with the Council that could also see accommodation at first floor level and I have taken into account the sketch and related information. However, these alternatives afford limited weight in the analysis. This is because they have not been fully detailed in plan form and are not the subject of a planning approval or a Certificate of Lawful Use. Therefore, there is uncertainty as to whether they could be undertaken in the event of a refusal of this scheme.
 10. In the light of the above analysis, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and thereby would conflict with Objective 9 and Policy CP4 of the Exeter Core Strategy (adopted February 2012), Policies DG1 and DG4 of the Exeter Local Plan First Review (adopted March 2005), the Extension Design SPD and the Framework which seek, amongst other things, to ensure that the massing of structures relates well to the character and appearance of the adjoining buildings and the surrounding townscape.

Other Matters

11. It is evident that the appellant has made considerable efforts to engage with the Council and to take into account their advice throughout the process. Council advice is given on a without prejudice basis, however, it does appear that there has been some inconsistency as to what an acceptable proposal may be. While I acknowledge this background, this is not a matter for me in the determination of the appeal proposal, which I have considered on its merits.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Wyborn

INSPECTOR