



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2019 by Scott Britnell MSc FdA

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/19/3226492

St Annes, 16A Queens Road, Berkhamsted, HP4 3HU

- 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 Guy Martin against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 4/01412/18/FHA, dated 6 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as first floor and roof extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Preliminary Matters

3. During the course of the planning application the description of development was amended to reflect the proposed development that required planning permission. I have considered the proposal on the same basis as the Council, as "First floor and roof extensions with front, rear and side windows. New windows to existing north elevation, alteration to chimney and front elevation including pitched roof over front door".
4. I have not been provided with a copy of the front page from the Council's Area Based Policies Supplementary Planning Guidance May 2004. I have therefore taken this title from within the document itself.

Main Issue

5. It is clear that the Council considers the effect of the proposals on the living conditions for occupants of neighbouring properties is acceptable. Further, no objection is raised by the Council to the proposed zinc canopy above the front door, the replacement of tiles on the bay window with zinc, or provision of a zinc lintel above the first-floor window. Its concerns centre on the first-floor and roof extensions and their effect on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area.

6. The main issue in this case therefore is the effect of the proposed first-floor and roof extensions on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

7. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling house located on a prominent corner plot at the junction of Queens Road and West Road. The property is a relatively narrow building and occupies what was previously the side garden to No 18 Queens Road. The surrounding area is characterised by a diverse mix of house types and sizes, although dwellings are largely of traditional design and employ traditional materials, such as brick and render elevations beneath tiled or slate roofs. Due to the topography of the area, Queens Road slopes down from South to North with houses generally stepping down in height.
8. The proposed first-floor and roof extensions, due to their scale and massing would visually dominate the dwelling, imbuing it with a top-heavy appearance. Moreover, the introduction of a mansard roof would fail to respect the simple and restrained appearance of the host building in terms of its form and design and would result in an overtly vertical emphasis. This would be exacerbated by the presence of the new elongated stairwell window to the side elevation, which would project from the first floor into the roof extension. While the building is fairly narrow, I consider that the sense of vertical emphasis would unbalance the property and cause harm to its character and appearance.
9. Moreover, the pre-patinated zinc finish to the roof extension would introduce an unsympathetic material to the dwelling and appear incongruous and discordant against the traditional brick elevations. The appellant has suggested a condition could be imposed, should the appeal be allowed, that the roof extension be finished in more traditional tiles. Whilst such materials would reflect the character and appearance of the host property, their use would not overcome the harm that I have identified with regards the scale, form, massing and design of the proposals. I acknowledge that the appellant is proposing to use zinc elsewhere on the dwelling, however this does not justify harmful development.
10. The proposals would result in a significant gap between the first-floor windows and eaves of the dwelling. This gap would eschew the proportions of the host building and reinforce the incongruous, elongated appearance that would occur as a result of the proposals. Although the appellant has directed me to examples of other properties in the area where gaps exist between windows and eaves, none are as pronounced as what is proposed here. Moreover, the examples appear to be contemporaneous with the construction of the dwellings, as opposed to the result of a later addition as proposed, and so form an inherent part of the building's character.
11. Given my findings above, it follows that the contribution the host property makes to the character and appearance of the area would be significantly diminished as a result of the proposals. Moreover, the increase in eaves and ridge height proposed would disrupt the stepped rhythm of the street scene. I acknowledge that the area is of a mixed character and appearance, however, the extended dwelling would result in a prominent, incongruous and alien feature in the street scene, even when viewed from West Road, in the context of the rear elevation of No 16 Queens Road. Harm to the character and appearance of the area would occur as a result of the extensions.

12. The appellant has referred me to a mansard roof at Nos 19 - 21 Shrubland Road. Whilst this is a short distance from the appeal site, I observed that the building it is of a different style and size to the appeal dwelling and is not therefore directly comparable. I also note that there are properties in Park View Road where zinc roofs are present, however there is no contextual relationship between the host property and this road. Reference has also been made to approved extensions at No 20a Shrublands Road and at Sand Banks, Water End, however the design of these extensions is not directly comparable to the scheme before me. Given my findings, I attach limited weight to these matters in my consideration of the proposal. These examples do not provide justification for the proposal before me. Each planning application and appeal are determined on their merits and this is the approach that I have taken in this case.
13. In light of my findings I conclude that the first-floor and roof extensions proposed would have an adverse and harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area, in conflict with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy 2006-203 and saved Appendix 3 and Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan. There would also be conflict with the Area Based Policies Supplementary Planning Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework (including paragraph 127 (c) referred to by the appellant). These policies and guidance seek, amongst other things, for development to be of a quality design which respects the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

Scott Britnell

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR