
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2019

by J Ayres BA Hons, Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/W/19/3223266

4, Aster Road, Southampton SO16 3BG

- 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 Sahota against the decision of Southampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 18/00895/FUL, dated 17 May 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2018.
 - The development proposed is erection of a part 2-storey, part first floor side extension to create 2 additional 1-bed flats and first floor rear extension to existing house in multiple occupation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on;
 - the character and appearance of host dwelling and wider area;
 - the living conditions of future and neighbouring occupiers;
 - the adjacent lime tree;
 - European designated sites; and
 - whether the proposal would provide adequate levels of parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The property is one of a pair of semi-detached houses, located directly opposite two pairs of almost identical semi-detached dwellings which make up the extent of this short road within a predominantly residential area. The proposal would involve a significant extension to the host dwelling, the side element of which would be two storeys in height.
4. The bulk, and scale of the proposal would appear overly dominant in respect of its relationship with the host dwelling. From the street scene the dwelling would lose its sense of symmetry, which is an important and prevalent character of this small cluster of properties. The substantial increase in mass would be readily visible from the public realm, and the positioning and full height of the extension to the side would fail to integrate in a positive way with

the host dwelling as a subordinate addition and as such would be harmful to the dominance of the main property. It would appear to swallow the host dwelling and the subsequent lack of space around the dwelling would create a cramped and restricted character to the site.

5. The development plan and supplementary guidance allows for extensions to dwellings, however such development should be carried out in a sympathetic and appropriate way. The scale of development proposed before me would be harmful to both the appearance of the host dwelling and the character of the immediate street scene.
6. As such I find that the proposal would conflict with Policies SDP1(i), SDP7(iv) and SDP9(i)(v) of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (March 2015 as amended) which collectively require new development to respect the scale and mass of existing buildings. It would also conflict with Policies CS5 and CS13 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2015 amended) which seek to ensure responds positively to the local surroundings and character.

Living conditions

7. The two-storey element of the proposal would stretch along the side boundary of the property and be located adjacent to the rear garden of 228d Honeysuckle Road. Whilst there is an existing single storey element along this boundary, the additional mass in such close proximity would have an overbearing impact on the living conditions of those occupying No 228d when using their rear garden. The existing lime tree already casts shadow over part of the garden and the proposed extension would be a significant increase in scale of the host property which would create a large flank wall extending along this boundary and create an oppressive and claustrophobic environment for the residents of 228d. The impact may not be harmful when within the property, due to the distance from the appeal site, however the use of the garden would be severely affected by the imposing and aggressive extension.
8. The units themselves would have a limited floor space, and the extension to the side would create two very restricted single bedroom units. The bedroom on the ground floor would have a window that would appear to look directly at a fence and this would be a very poor outlook for the future occupier. The rear element at ground floor level would then look out onto the small and restricted shared amenity space to the rear. Due to the limited space within the bedroom it is likely that the occupant would spend considerable time in the main living space. The practicality of this arrangement would not provide adequate living conditions for the future occupier of the ground floor single unit, with poor outlook and lack of privacy. Whilst there may be existing issues surrounding privacy with the current arrangement, this does not justify additional development that would exacerbate this issue.
9. The first floor flat would have a better outlook to the bedroom as it would be at the front of the property. Access to the amenity space at the rear would involve leaving the property and walking through the ground floor which would be separately occupied. The only alternative would be to use the space at the front of the property which is currently laid as hardstanding and open to the highway. The appellant has indicated that this space would be used for parking. It would therefore provide no privacy or security for occupants and in reality it would be an entirely unsuitable amenity space. The suggestion of a fire escape was raised within the appeal documents however this did not form part of the

original scheme, it is not detailed on the plans before me, and was not consulted upon as part of the proposal.

10. I find that the proposal would result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with regards to the use of their outdoor amenity space. It would fail to provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers with regard to the provision of space and ensuring a suitable level of privacy. It would therefore conflict with Policies SDP1(i) and H7 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (March 2015 as amended) which, amongst other things, requires development to achieve the highest standard of design, and only permit development where it would not unacceptably affect the amenity of residents. The proposal would also conflict with Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2015 amended) which advises that amenity space should be fit for purpose.

Impact on Lime tree

11. In the rear garden of No 228d Honeysuckle Road a tall lime tree sits near to the boundary with the appeal property. Due to its location there is a possibility that the proposal would result in damage to the integrity of the tree and as such it may be necessary to protect the roots of the tree during construction. There is no evidence before me to demonstrate that the tree would be adequately protected, and as such I find that the proposal would fail to comply with Policies SDP7 and SDP12 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (March 2015 as amended) insofar as it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would be compatible with existing natural features. The proposal would also conflict with Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2015 amended) due to a failure to integrate with the local surroundings.

Parking

12. The space to the front of the dwelling accommodates two vehicles, and the appellant suggests that a further space could be provided. However, the plans do not identify how such an arrangement would work, nor does it assess the impact of the proposal on the demand for on-street parking.
13. On the basis of the limited evidence before me I find that the proposal may result in an increased demand for on-street parking and would therefore conflict with Policy SDP1(i) of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (2015) as it has not been demonstrated that the parking would be provided without causing harm to the safety of residents. It would also conflict with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2015 amended) which requires parking to be provided in accordance with the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document 2011.

European Sites

14. The appeal site is within 5 kilometres of the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Areas which are designated as European sites in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). I have no evidence before me to suggest that compliance with Policy CS22 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (2015) has been secured. In any event, as I am dismissing the appeal on other substantive grounds as detailed

above it is not necessary for me to assess the effect of this development on the European sites in any further detail.

Conclusion

15. The proposal would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that would outweigh this conflict, and for the reasons above the appeal is dismissed.

J Ayres

INSPECTOR