



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14th January 2020

by M Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/D/19/3238638

Melrose, Alton Lane, Four Marks, Alton GU34 5AJ

- 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 Jack Holloway against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 39323/006, dated 26 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as "Raising the ridge to accommodate a first floor extension with three front and rear dormers, single storey front extension and chimney flue".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised in this case are the effect of the proposal on:
 - The provision of a range of dwelling sizes to meet the housing needs of the district, and
 - The character and appearance of the host property.

Reasons

Range of dwelling sizes

3. Saved policy H16 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review (2006) (the Local Plan) sets out that where a dwelling has an original floorspace of between 67 square metres (m²) and 266 m², that extensions to that dwelling will only be permitted where the resultant dwelling size does not exceed that of the original dwelling by more than 50%. The justification for the policy explains that there has been a trend towards larger dwellings in the countryside, many of which are created through the expansion of existing properties and that housing needs surveys identify a continuing need for small accommodation.
4. Whilst there is some discrepancy in terms of actual floorspace measurements between those provided by the Council in the delegated report and the Appellant in the Statement of Case, it is clear that the original floorspace falls between 67 and 266 m². Moreover, both main parties agree that the proposed scheme would result in an approximately 110% increase in floorspace (the

Council state it is a 111% increase). As such, the proposed extensions would clearly exceed the extent of extensions permitted by the policy.

5. The appellant contends that there is an existing loft within the property, which the proposed floor area would reflect and as a consequence there is only an increase in floor area of 5 m². However, the justification for policy H16 clearly states that original floorspace includes roof space which was originally designed as habitable space. The appellant points out that the loft space is not fully usable, other than for storage, due to insufficient head height. As such, I find that the loft can not be considered to be habitable space. The appellant also provides calculations of the proposed increase in terms of volume. However, the policy specifically refers to floorspace and as such these calculations do not dissuade me from finding that there is conflict with policy.
6. There is also the contention that the policy is inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), in that the Framework contains no similar restriction on extensions to dwellings in the countryside. However, I am conscious that the Framework does advocate that housing should reflect the needs in the community. Thus, I do not consider that the policy is inconsistent with the Framework. The appellant also states that there is no similar policy within the Council's emerging Draft Local Plan (2017-2036). The Council highlight that at the time of the decision on the planning application, no weight was accorded to the policies of this emerging plan. I have no information before me in respect of the stage of preparation or whether there are any unresolved objections to the plan. Even if I were to give limited weight to this emerging plan, it would not outweigh the conflict with the adopted policy that I have identified.
7. Accordingly, the scheme would adversely affect the provision of a range of dwelling sizes to meet the housing needs of the district and be contrary to policy H16 of the Local Plan.

Character and appearance

8. The existing dwelling comprises a single-storey property which has a stepped front elevation, with three roof ridgelines terminating at the front elevation; two with a hipped roof and one with a gable. The property has the appearance of a low, modest dwelling.
9. The proposed scheme would involve the increase in the height of the dwelling in order to provide an additional storey of accommodation. The stepped front elevation would be lost, and an expansive elevation would result. The modest appearance of the dwelling would be replaced with that of a substantial two storey property, of considerable scale and massing. Whilst the proposal includes the use of hipped roofs, the u-shaped roof form, with twin hipped appearance to the front, which positively contributes to the character of the existing dwelling, would be eliminated. As such, I find that the proposals would not take account of the form and design of the existing dwelling.
10. I observed that there was variety in terms of the design and scale of nearby dwellings. This however does not diminish the harm to the host property that I identify.
11. Consequently, the proposal would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host property, in conflict with policy HE2 of the Local Plan,

insofar as it requires that alterations and extensions to buildings take account of the design, scale and character of the original building. The proposal would also conflict with the advice of The East Hampshire District Local Plan – Residential Extensions & Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document, which seeks to ensure extensions respond positively to opportunities to improve the original building.

Other Matters

12. I note that the appellant contends that the proposal would be an efficient use of land. This however would not outweigh the harm that I identify above.

Conclusion

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

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR