
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 4 February 2020

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/19/3241469

10 Hares Lane, Hartley Wintney, Hampshire RG27 8AD

- 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 and Mrs Bridges against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref: 19/01726/HOU, dated 12 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey side extension and single storey rear extension. Alterations to fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council amended the description of the proposed development from 'two-storey side extension, single storey rear extension' to the 'erection of a two-storey side extension and single storey rear extension. Alterations to fenestration'. The revised description has been used by the appellant on the appeal form. I consider that the revised description represents a more succinct summary of the proposed development and have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are
 - the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with particular reference to the character and setting of the Hartley Wintney Conservation Area (the CA); and
 - whether appropriate living conditions would be secured for the future occupiers of the dwelling.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site consists of an end of terrace dwelling. A notable feature of this terrace is the degree of symmetry that exists between the original dwelling and the houses to which it is attached. The dwelling is also constructed to a traditional design and palette of materials. A nearby terrace (between 14 and 17 Hares Lane) is also present. Whilst this terrace is constructed to a different design, it also has a strong degree of symmetry. The appeal site is

- located within the CA. The significance of this is, in part, derived from the presence of traditionally designed buildings close to the countryside.
5. The proposed extension would be constructed with a very small set back from the front elevation of the existing dwelling and has the same height. In consequence, the proposed development would add significantly to the bulk of the dwelling and would not represent a subordinate addition to the building. In consequence, the proposed extension would not represent a proportionate addition to the original dwelling.
 6. As a result, the proposed extension would erode the traditional and historic character of the surrounding area owing to the loss of the symmetry within the terrace and the unbalancing effect that the proposed extension would have. This effect would not be satisfactorily mitigated by the proposed palette of materials or fenestration arrangement.
 7. In addition, the proposed extension would not be readily screened. Therefore, it would represent an incongruous and strident feature that would erode the character of the site and the surrounding area. In reaching this view, I have had regard to the fact that the proposed extension would be visible from the nearby junction of Hares Lane and the A30, which would give the development a great degree of prominence.
 8. Owing to the positioning of the appeal site, and the more open character of the site immediately adjoining the positioning of the proposed extension, the development would not lead to a significant terracing effect. However, this does not overcome the harm arising from the unbalancing of the appearance of the terrace.
 9. Whilst I note that the site is not one of the larger buildings in the CA, the evidence before me is indicative of the appeal site being part of a traditionally designed residential terrace and is prominently located. I have also found that the character of the area is, in part, derived from the presence of symmetrically designed terraces. Accordingly, the harm to the character of the CA is notable.
 10. I acknowledge that the proposed development would result in the removal of a flat-roofed two-storey extension. However, this extension, owing to the layout and positioning of other buildings and landscaping does not have the same level of prominence within the surrounding area as the appeal proposal would have. Therefore, I do not believe that the removal of this extension outweighs the previously identified harm. Other alterations made to the building, such as the construction of a porch do not have the same impacts on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
 11. My attention has been drawn to a number of other developments within the wider area. I do not appear to have full information regarding the planning circumstances of these, which lessens the amount of weight that I can attribute to them. However, I note that many of the cited examples are located to the rear of their respective sites or are set back from the highway. Accordingly, they do not have the same degree of prominence.
 12. The buildings on the opposite side of Hares Lane are of a relatively small scale and have a diminished height. In consequence, they do not have the same impacts and prominence that the development before me would have. I

therefore do not find that the presence of other developments elsewhere requires me to disregard my previous concerns.

13. I have identified harm to the CA arising from the development. This harm is less than substantial, and therefore in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I am obliged to balance this harm against any public benefits. Whilst I acknowledge that the proposal would result in the removal of the flat roofed extension, the benefits arising from this are relatively small and very localised in impact. Accordingly, they do not outweigh the harm as has previously been identified.
14. I therefore conclude that the development would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the site, and the surrounding area, including the character and setting of the CA. The development in this regard would fail to comply with the requirements of Policies GEN1, GEN4, RUR24 and CON13 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) and First alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) (2009) (the Local Plan); and the Framework. These, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that new developments are in keeping with the local character; sustain or improve urban design qualities; are not of a disproportionate scale; and conserve or enhance the character of heritage assets.

Living conditions

15. The property has a rear garden, whilst the areas to the front and side of the property have been given over to car parking.
16. Given that the development would still retain a reasonably large space for private recreation or outdoor play, the development would not prevent residents of the property from having access to such facilities. Furthermore, the evidence before me is indicative that should the proposed development proceed, sufficient off-road car parking would be provided at the site, thereby ensuring a convenient and appropriate access to both types of space.
17. In addition, the development is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the levels of light and outlook experienced by the occupiers of the dwelling, which is necessary to secure appropriate living conditions in the future.
18. Therefore, whilst I have found that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, I do not believe that the proposed development would not lead to a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of the dwelling. The development, in this regard, would fail to accord with the requirements of Policy GEN1 of the Local Plan. This policy, amongst other matters, seeks to ensure that the living conditions of residents are maintained.

Planning balance and conclusion

19. Whilst the development would not cause harm to the living conditions of the future occupiers of the dwelling, this is outweighed by the harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the CA. Accordingly, for the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR