



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 February 2020

by Christopher Miell MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/D/19/3239061

5 Rockbourne Road, Harestock SO22 6JS

- 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 Dr Helen Aiston against the decision of Winchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01164/HOU, dated 24 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'replacement roof and single storey ground floor extension including internal alterations'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey mid-terrace dwelling, which is located on Rockbourne Road. The property features a single storey section on the front elevation, which extends the full width of the dwelling and provides additional living accommodation on the ground floor. The proposal is for a single storey porch extension to the front of the dwelling, and the replacement of the roof of the existing single storey section of the host building.
4. Rockbourne Road is a short street located between Buriton Road and Priors Dean Road. The surrounding area has a suburban residential character and the properties on Rockbourne Road are laid out in three terraced blocks, each consisting of four dwellings, which are connected and have a staggered layout.
5. The appellant contends that the local area has an undistinguished character with the existing dwellings having varied frontages, extensions and porch designs. To this regard, the appellant has drawn my attention to paragraph 3.2 of the Council's High Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document (March 2015) (the 'SPD'), which states that "*where the existing character is undistinguished, opportunities should be taken to help create a distinctive character*".
6. The properties on Rockbourne Road have a homogenous design and the terraced dwellings appear well balanced when viewed from the street, which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area. Where the

street facing elevations of the other terraced properties on Rockbourne Road have been altered, such as the conversion of integral garages into habitable space, the works have been undertaken in a sensitive manner that retains the original design balance and symmetry of the host building and the overall terrace. Therefore, the properties continue to contribute positively to the local distinctiveness of the area. As such, I am not persuaded by the appellant's contention that the local area has an 'undistinguished character'.

7. Despite the use of sympathetic materials, the single storey scale of the porch and the staggered building line of the properties on Rockbourne Road, owing to the forward projection of the proposed porch beyond the established building line of the host building and the neighbouring properties, the development would appear unduly prominent and incongruous in the locality. Therefore, the proposal would unacceptably diminish the architectural integrity of the host building and the row of terraced properties on Rockbourne Road.
8. The appellant has suggested that a landscaping scheme could be secured by a planning condition, which would screen views of the proposed porch from the street. However, no details have been provided to demonstrate how this could be achieved at the appeal site. In any event, the provision of high levels of soft landscaping at the front of the site would not outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, which I have identified above.
9. The appellant argues that the proposed porch would not be prominent within the local street context due to the topography of the site and the curvature/slope of the road. In addition, the appellant contends that parked vehicles and existing mature trees and hedgerows within the street would screen long views of the porch from Buriton Road and Priors Dean Road. Whilst these factors would limit the extent to which the proposed porch would be visible from long views, for the reasons given above, the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area when viewed from more localised viewpoints.
10. The appellant points out that several properties within the wider area have been granted planning permission for porch/front extensions. However, I am not aware of the particular circumstances in those cases. Nevertheless, none of the examples contribute directly to the aforementioned and distinctive characteristics of the terraced properties along Rockbourne Road, and in any event, I must consider the appeal scheme on its own merits.
11. The appellant argues that the proposal would accord with Policy CP13 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (March 2013) (the 'CS'), which relates to high quality design. However, this policy has not been included within the Council's reason for refusal. In any event, I note that the policy states that new development should make a positive contribution to the local environment and create an individual place with a distinctive character. For the reasons set out above, I consider that the proposed porch would not accord with the objectives of Policy 13 of the CS.
12. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would not accord with Policy DM16 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 (April 2017) and Policy DS1 of the CS which require new development to respond positively to the character, appearance and variety of the local environment, within and surrounding the site, in terms of its design,

scale and layout; and in so far as the proposed development would not be sensitive to the area's existing character. In addition, the proposal would not accord with the guidance relating to front extensions contained within the SPD.

Other Matters

13. I agree with the Council that the roof replacement would be acceptable in terms of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area and that it would accord with the relevant planning policies. However, this part of the proposal is not severable from the rest of the proposed development, so I cannot issue a split decision.
14. Reference has been made with regards to the Council's handling of the planning application. However, this is not in itself relevant to the consideration of the appeal proposal.
15. I note that the Parish Council support the proposal and that no objections were made by local residents. However, this does not outweigh or alter my conclusions on the main issue.
16. The proposal would modernise the layout of the existing property and make use of passive solar gain, which would improve the existing living conditions for the appellant and future occupiers and may reduce energy consumption. Such benefits would not be significant enough to alter or outweigh my conclusions on the main issue.
17. The appellant explains that the proposal would improve accessibility into the host building because an existing step up to the front door would be removed as part of the works. However, I note that the proposed front elevation shows a step up to the new front door. Therefore, this is not a determinative point in this appeal.
18. The appellant states that the proposal would provide an active frontage on to Rockbourne Road. However, the existing property has ground floor windows and a front door facing the street, all of which already provide a degree of activity and natural surveillance.
19. None of the other matters raised alter or outweigh my conclusions on the main issue.

Conclusion

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

Christopher Miell

INSPECTOR