



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2020

by Christopher Miell MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P1750/D/19/3240050

145 Alexandra Road, Farnborough GU14 6RR

- 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 M & S Hussain against the decision of Rushmoor Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00367/FULPP, dated 29 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal was submitted by Dr M & S Hussain. However, the applicant for the planning application was 'Other' Hussain. The appellant has confirmed in writing that the above parties are the same person. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis. In the interests of precision, I have used the appellant's name from the appeal form within the banner heading.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (i) the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area; and (ii) the effect of the development on existing trees.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwellinghouse which is positioned on the corner of Alexandra Road and Church Road West. The property is of a traditional design and features accommodation over four floors, which includes a basement level.
5. The proposal is for a two-storey extension to the side of the existing dwelling. The extension would be supported by columns with a void beneath the building. Externally, the extension would be constructed from materials to match the host building.
6. The surrounding area has a suburban residential character and the properties within the local area date from a variety of architectural periods. The properties are typically set back from the highway in a linear pattern of development and

- follow a clear building line. Whilst there are differing architectural styles present within the street, the use of common materials results in a design balance and symmetry which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The appeal property forms part of a group of six similar properties on the eastern side of Alexandra Road, which date from the same architectural period. The appellant explains that most of the other properties within the group have been extended to the side. On my site visit, I observed that the extensions are typically of an appropriate scale and have a subservient relationship with the host building. Consequently, the host properties retain their original design balance and symmetry, which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
 8. Despite the proposed use of sympathetic materials, a traditional roof form, and the extent to which the proposed extension would be set back from the front elevation of the host building, the overall footprint of the proposed extension would be significant and excessive in the context of the proportions of the existing dwelling. In addition, the introduction of bay windows to the front and side of the proposed extension would compete for prominence with the original building, which would undermine the design balance and symmetry of the host property. As such, the proposed extension would fail to create a subservient relationship with the host building.
 9. In addition to the above, the proposed column design with a void below the ground floor would be a discordant and inharmonious architectural feature out of keeping with the host building and other properties within the local area. Therefore, when viewed in the context of the surrounding area, the proposal would appear as an unduly prominent form of development, which would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
 10. The appellant explains that the column design and void is required to avoid development within the Root Protection Area of a tree outside of the appeal site. I have assessed the effect of the development on the existing trees as a separate main issue. However, even if I were to accept that this were the case, this would not outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, which I have identified above.
 11. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would not accord with Policy DE1 of the Rushmoor Local Plan 2014-2032 (Adopted February 2019) (the 'LP') which requires new development to make a positive contribution towards improving the quality of the built environment and (a) include high-quality design that respects the character and appearance of the local area. Accordingly, the proposal would also be inconsistent with paragraph 127(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires development to be sympathetic to the local character.

Effect on existing trees

12. Policy NE3 of the LP states that *"The Council will not permit development which would affect adversely existing trees worthy of retention, particularly those subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and where appropriate will ensure that trees are protected either through condition or the making of new TPOs."*

13. The appeal is supported by an arboricultural method statement, tree survey and tree protection plan¹, which identifies the species, position and overall condition of the existing trees within and near to the boundary the appeal site. The report concludes that the proposed development would penetrate the Root Protection Area of a mature common lime tree and that the adverse impact of the development on identified trees could be reduced to an acceptable level through a 'specially engineered foundation design'.
14. The appellant's statement explains that 'isolated concrete pads' would be formed, which would allow tree roots to spread, as shown by drawing number PL-12. However, this drawing is not included on the list of refused plans on the Council's decision notice, nor does it form part of the evidence before me. As this matter goes to the heart of the acceptability of the proposed development, it would not be suitable to impose a planning condition relating to the submission of the details of the engineered foundations for later approval.
15. In conclusion, no technical information has been provided about the design of the engineered foundations. In the absence of such details, I am unable to assess the extent to which such an approach may or may not safeguard the health and longevity of the existing trees that would be retained as part of the proposal. Therefore, I am unable to conclude that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on existing trees. Consequently, I cannot conclude that the proposal would accord with Policy NE3 of the LP.

Other Matters

16. The proposal would provide additional living accommodation, which would improve the existing living conditions for the appellant and their extended family. Such benefits would not be significant enough to alter or outweigh my conclusions on the main issues.
17. I note that several local residents support the proposal. However, this does not outweigh or alter my conclusions on the main issues.
18. None of the other matters alter or outweigh my overall conclusion below.

Conclusion

19. I have been unable to conclude that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the existing trees that would be retained as part of the proposal. In addition, I have found that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Christopher Miell

INSPECTOR

¹ Report by Harper Tree Consulting (Ref: 2018058 v2.0) dated 9 May 2019