



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2020

by Ben Plenty BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4625/D/20/3245191

6 Highdown Crescent, Monkspath, Solihull B90 4TY

- 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 Mrs Rebecca Roden against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2019/02898/MINFHO, dated 13 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is for a first-floor bedroom extension and bathroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the streetscene.

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of a semi-detached dwelling with a side garage that is connected to the neighbouring garage. The site is close to the junction with Meerhill Avenue and is in a comparatively prominent location. The current dwelling has a small infill front extension, extending the garage toward the main front elevation of the dwelling. Highdown Crescent consists of various house-types, including detached houses and bungalows. The mix of house types and gaps between dwellings provide breaks in the built form. The appeal site is within a short row of similar dwellings with limited space between them. Garages in this row are mostly set back. These create a lower profile and visual spacing at first-floor, adding separation to the built form. Accordingly, this space provides contrast to the otherwise solid built form within this row. The site makes a positive contribution towards the spaciousness of Highdown Crescent.
4. The Council's householder design guide¹, provides guidance for extending dwellings. In respect to first-floor side extensions it notes that the space around dwellings usually make an important contribution to the appearance of the house and the character of the area. It requires the 'terracing effect' to be avoided and for proposed side extensions to be designed to maintain a gap of one metre to the boundary between dwellings.

¹ Solihull MBC House Extension Guidelines- Supplementary Planning Document 2010

5. The proposal would add a first-floor extension to the garage and infill the open gap above the garage. Therefore, whilst the dwelling is already linked at ground floor the proposal would degrade the contribution it makes to the sense of spaciousness within the street. Furthermore, when on site I observed that the dwellings in Crimsote Close were generally built to a higher density and include a significant proportion of terraced dwellings. However, this form of development, which is some distance from the appeal site, is not characteristic of development in Highdown Crescent. This therefore has a limited bearing in informing the appropriate design response for the appeal site.
6. My attention has been drawn to several local extensions. A dwelling opposite the appeal site has been subject to a side extension. This is different to the context of the appeal site as it has not meaningfully reduced the spaciousness of the area, being on a corner plot. This has also not therefore contributed towards the conjoining of two neighbouring dwellings. The Council's householder design guide is clear that a separation gap is necessary for proposals that seek to extend dwellings that are adjacent to the shared boundary of other dwellings. Furthermore, the approach to such proposals by other Local Planning Authorities, referred to in evidence, has no bearing on the merits of this proposal.
7. The semi-detached dwelling of 12 Highdown Crescent, rather than No 17, has also been subject to a first-floor side extension. This is located at the end of the cul-de-sac. It is not in evidence when this was approved. Consequently, I cannot be satisfied that it was determined within the same policy context. In any event, the dwelling is located in a less prominent location than the appeal site. It therefore has a harmful but lesser effect on the spaciousness of the street than the proposal. Furthermore, due to its subdued location the extended dwelling in that case has not demonstrably altered the characteristics of the area.
8. Accordingly, the proposal would not accord with policy P15 of the Solihull Local Plan (2013). This requires, amongst other things, for development to conserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness. The proposal would also fail to meet the Council's House Extension Guidelines SPD. This includes the requirement for side extensions to maintain a minimum of a 1m gap, to shared boundaries to neighbouring dwellings, to prevent them becoming conjoined. The proposed extension would therefore also fail to accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks development to add to the overall quality of an area.
9. For the above reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

Ben Plenty

INSPECTOR