The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 July 2020

by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

a person appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1110/D/19/3242409
11 Sheridan Road, Exeter EX4 8EY

- 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 J Courtney against the decision of Exeter City Council.
- The application Ref 19/1184/FUL, dated 28 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 October 2019.
- The development proposed is extension at first floor to create additional bedroom.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed extension on:

   i) the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area, and

   ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of No 13 Sheridan Road with particular regard to their outlook.

Reasons

i) Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached house located in an estate with a planned layout. It occupies a corner plot position whereby the land at the corner is divided almost equally with No 13 Sheridan Road, a bungalow that is sited to the rear. As a consequence, the side boundary has a diagonal alignment in contrast to the straight flank of the main two storey part of the house.

4. The Council's 2008 Supplementary Planning Document `Householder's guide to extension design' (SPD) contains three elements of guidance which are particularly relevant. Firstly, it advises that extensions should be set back at least 900mm from the front main wall to ensure the extension will be subservient to the original house. Secondly, to ensure an extension is subservient and is of visually pleasing proportions, it should be no more than half the width of the original house. Thirdly, side walls should remain parallel to the original house to ensure the established character of the street and the original house is maintained. In respect of the latter, Figure 3.3 is provided which diagrammatically illustrates that a side wall to an extension should not

be partially set back to account for a diagonal site boundary. Instead, the width of the extension should be reduced accordingly.

5. The appeal property has an existing single storey side extension which does not adhere to the guidance set out above, although its approval clearly predates the publication of the SPD. The extension aligns with the front main wall, is almost as wide as the main two storey part of the house and the side wall is partially set back to account for the diagonal alignment of the side boundary.

6. The proposed scheme seeks to add a first floor to the existing extension using matching materials. As it would project a little further to the rear, there would be a small overhang of the ground floor and the diagonal set back element would be a degree deeper.

7. Whilst the existing extension already deviates from the SPD, this does not justify its replication at the first-floor level, which would also, therefore, conflict with the SPD. Owing to its excessive width and lack of set back, the proposed extension would appear unduly dominant and disproportionate to the form and character of the original house. The diagonal set back element, which would be particularly prominent due to its high-level and the exposed corner plot position, would also appear awkward and incongruous. The general failure to harmonise with the original house would be detrimental to the visual qualities of the planned street scene.

8. Although it is appreciated the proposed extension was designed with a ridge height lower than the original dwelling, thereby providing a degree of subservience, this alone is insufficient to render the scheme acceptable.

9. Accordingly, owing to its inappropriate design, in particular its position, size and shape, it is concluded the proposed extension would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. It would therefore conflict with Objective 9 and Policy DG1 of the Council's 2005 adopted Local Plan First Review (LP). These seek to ensure that development proposals promote local distinctiveness and contribute to the visual richness and amenity of the townscape. It would also conflict with paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (`the Framework') which promotes developments that are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. As already noted above, it would also conflict with the SPD.

ii) Living conditions

10. Around half the front elevation to No 13 is situated behind the existing single storey extension at the appeal property. Notwithstanding the small set back on either side of the common boundary, due to its significant proportions the proposed extension would appear overbearing and oppressive when seen from the neighbouring property.

11. Although it is appreciated the extension was designed so that no window would overlook No 13, the resulting bleakness of the rear elevation arising from this design response adds to its oppressive appearance.

12. Consequently, owing to its inappropriate design, in particular its position, height and massing, it is concluded the proposed extension would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 13 with particular regard to their outlook. It would therefore conflict with Policy

DG4 of the LP and paragraph 127 of the Framework which seek a high standard of amenity for residents. It would also conflict with the SPD which specifies that extensions should not adversely affect the outlook enjoyed by neighbours.

Other Matters

13. Whilst the Council referred to Policy CP4 of its Core Strategy (2012) in the reasons for refusal, it is considered the policy is not applicable in this case as it concerns residential density in a numerical respect and the proposal would have no effect in this regard.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C J Ford

APPOINTED PERSON