
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2020

by C Dillon BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J4525/D/20/3255618

20, Grizedale Court, Seaburn Dene Sunderland SR6 8JP

- 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 Stephen Armstrong against the decision of Sunderland City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00109/FUL, dated 22 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of single storey extensions to front and rear and first floor extension above existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development cited on the planning application form was amended prior to the determination of the planning application to that contained in the banner heading above. I am satisfied that parties agreed this change and that it accurately reflects the components of the appeal scheme. Thus, the appeal proceeds on that basis.
3. My attention has been drawn to the fact that revised plans were submitted to the Council, although these did not overcome the Council's concern. The Council has clarified that the plans which were refused planning permission were those originally submitted. The appellant has indicated that this is the scheme upon which his appeal is based. The appeal proceeds on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed first floor extension above the existing garage on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area, with particular regard to size, scale, massing and positioning.

Reasons

5. Dwellings within this well-established residential area tend to be evenly spaced, brick built, two storey semi-detached properties, connected by their side garages and any subsequent first floor extension above. Hipped roofs are a distinct feature of the street scene. Front and corner gardens and driveways face onto the public highway, enclosed by a low means of boundary treatment and are therefore more visually exposed within the street scene. I observed

that extending to the side of properties at first floor level has been a common means of increasing living accommodation in this area. However, the appeal site differs from its neighbours insofar as it is set within a corner plot, on the junction between Grizedale Court and Staveley Road. The existing attached garage which would be built upon has an irregular shape, being wider than a single width garage at the front and narrowing to the rear as it follows the splayed corner plot boundary.

6. The Council's 'Householder Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document' states that in order to achieve subordination and maintain the character and appearance of the street scene, side extensions should usually incorporate a roof shape that matches the existing property, not exceed 50% of the width of its host, have a ridgeline which is lower than that of its host and a front wall set back from the original building at first floor level. However, the prevailing step-down and step-in measures evident in the locality to ensure that extensions remain distinguishable from and subservient to their host and, less dominant within the street scene, would not be employed in this instance. Neither would the proposed first floor extension accord with those other relevant design principles.
7. I observed that the positioning of the proposed first floor extension relative to other properties would not significantly increase any terracing effect. Although a visual gap would be retained with No 22 Grizedale Court, I do not agree that this would provide any degree of subordination. Furthermore, the positioning of the host property within this corner plot means that the proposed first floor extension would be more exposed, and therefore more pronounced within the street scene than its neighbours from vantage points to the side and between properties to the rear. In addition, the extension of the existing roof form and replacement of the existing hipped end with a full height gable end roof design would serve to significantly increase the scale, size and massing of the appeal proposal when viewed from the front, side and rear. This would be exacerbated by the width of the first floor extension proposed.
8. Cumulatively, all of these credentials would increase the presence of the proposed first floor extension to an extent that would be unsympathetic and constitute an unacceptable degree of dominance to the host property and the wider street scene. This would be to an extent that would be unduly obtrusive.
9. My attention has been drawn to the fact that the appellant has secured planning consent for a different scheme. I am satisfied that consented scheme is a relevant fallback position, having a reasonable prospect of being implemented.
10. Unlike the appeal proposal, the fallback scheme would reflect the prevailing means of extension in the locality and more closely align with the principles set out in the Council's supplementary design guidance. I observed that those previous extensions are defining features that contribute to the character and appearance of the street scene and wider area. The fallback scheme does not wholly accord with the level of step-back and width cited in the design guidance. However, unlike the appeal scheme, it would nonetheless convey an appropriate degree of subservience to its host. It would also be more respectful to the character and appearance of its host and wider street scene than the appeal proposal as the resulting roof would convey a roof form which would

- preserve the definition of the existing hipped roof, as well as being significantly more compact in size, scale and massing.
11. Consequently, I find that the fallback scheme when compared with the appeal proposal would not present an equivalent or greater degree of harm to the character and appearance of the host building and wider street scene. I note that relying upon the footprint of the existing garage would result in a somewhat compromised side elevation and roof design regardless of the solution pursued given its irregular shape. The evidence before me does not sufficiently convince me that the less harmful fallback option would not be feasible in construction terms. Even if that was the case, that would not provide sufficient justification given the level of harm that the appeal proposal would impose. For all of these reasons, I do not find that the existence of the fallback scheme justifies the appeal proposal.
 12. My attention has been drawn to other forms of extension in the area that do not employ the design measures cited in the Council's supplementary guidance. However, I observed that these examples represent a minority, enjoy a different juxtaposition to the appeal property and, in some instances, demonstrate the very impacts that the Council's guidance seeks to avoid.
 13. Through its assessment of the appeal scheme, the Council has raised no concerns regarding the proposed single storey rear extension and front porch and from the evidence before me, I have no reason to disagree. However, for the reasons given, I find that the proposed first floor extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area, with particular regard to size, scale, massing and positioning.
 14. Policy BH1 of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Plan (2015-2033) states that to achieve high quality design and positive improvement development should be of a scale, massing, layout and appearance which respects and enhances the positive qualities of nearby properties and their locality. Given the harm that I have identified, I find that the appeal proposal conflicts with this policy.
 15. There have been no third party objections to the proposal, the other components of the appeal scheme do not present this policy conflict and the appeal proposal otherwise accords with the development plan when taken as a whole. However, in view of the harm that I have found, these do not outweigh the conflict with Policy BH1.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given the appeal should be dismissed.

C Dillon

INSPECTOR