
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 August 2020

by C Dillon BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P4605/D/20/3254298

169, Ravenhurst Road, Birmingham B17 9HT

- 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 Gabriel against the decision of Birmingham City Council.
 - The application Ref 2020/00751/PA, dated 28 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is extension and modifications.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a 2 storey side extension at 169, Ravenhurst Road, Birmingham B17 9HT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2020/00751/PA, dated 28 January 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 19022-P-100_Location plan 270120, 19022-P-101_270120, and 19022-P-102_270120.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matters

2. The planning application forms show the applicants to be Mr and Mrs Gabriel. Although the appeal is made in the name of the latter only, she is entitled to exercise the right of appeal. The appeal proceeds on that basis.
3. There was some inconsistency regarding the date of the planning application. However, this has subsequently been clarified by parties as being that shown on the banner heading.
4. The description of development on the planning application form and above banner heading differs to that cited on the decision notice. I have used the latter description in paragraph 1 as this more accurately describes the appeal proposal.

Main Issue

5. The Council has raised no objections to the appeal proposal in respect to effect on living conditions of neighbouring residents or parking and highway safety. I have no reason to disagree with that assessment. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and wider area, with particular regard to scale, positioning and design.

Reasons

6. This well-established residential area conveys a mature, leafy and spacious suburban character. Dwellings within the vicinity of the appeal site are detached and semi-detached of varying designs. Roof planes are a particularly dominant feature. Render and brick, bay windows and gable peaks to eaves are all design features evident within the street scene. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling of one and a half storeys in height to the front and 2 storeys to the rear. It is set within a generous, elevated corner plot at the junction between Ravenhurst Road and Oakham Road and is enclosed in part by a high close boarded timber fence.
7. The Council's 'Extending Your Home' Supplementary Planning Guidance sets out a number of principles to ensure that any extension is sympathetic to its host and wider area. I note that the principle of a stepped ridge line to secure subservience and differentiation between property frontages would not be employed. However, this would not give rise to any terracing effect, given the corner positioning of the proposed extension and its juxtaposition and spacing with neighbouring properties.
8. Furthermore, roof planes are a dominant feature of the host and other house types within the wider street scene. Subservience would still be achieved as the appeal proposal would be set back substantially from the existing front elevation. The existing generous width of the host dwelling means that the appeal proposal would represent only a small increase in the scale of the property. The eaves of the appeal proposal would be stepped up from that of the front elevation, in line with the existing front gable feature and rear elevation. Contrary to the Council's assessment, given the proposed set back, ratio of solid wall to roof plane at first floor level relative to the remainder of the host dwelling, and the materials and brick detailing proposed, I find that the resulting front elevation would not impose harm on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider street scene. Collectively, these design credentials would assist in reducing the bulk of the appeal proposal.
9. The proposed bay window at first floor level would reflect an existing feature that would otherwise be lost. Indeed, the Council's supplementary guidance warns against blank side elevations. Consequently, the resulting extension would successfully turn the corner by adding visual interest and activity to what would otherwise be a blank elevation at first floor level above the fence line. It would not be overly competitive visually so as to be detrimental to the character and appearance of Oakham Road.
10. In terms of the contention between parties over the relationship of the appeal proposal with existing building lines, I observed that being within a corner plot the appeal proposal would be visible within the street scene upon approach from either direction along both Oakham Road and Ravenhurst Road and the

resulting vista would be altered. When viewed from vantage points along either of these streets, I do not find the positioning of the appeal proposal would be inconsistent with the prevailing building lines to a degree that would be overly dominant, incongruous and therefore discordant with its context. This is because of the sympathetic scale and design of the proposal relative to its host. Additionally, the appeal proposal would be mostly read within the remaining enclosed side garden against the bulk of the host dwelling and backdrop of surrounding properties and tree canopies during the approach along either street.

11. The spacious character of the street would be retained given the remaining separation distances between dwellings. Notwithstanding its elevated position, as the ground level of the appeal site is equivalent to its neighbours, it would not make the appeal proposal any more imposing in comparison. Rather, the scale, design, materials and siting would enable it to successfully blend in with its context, so as not to be visually intrusive in the wider street scene.
12. The appeal proposal resonates with the objectives of the supplementary guidance cited in a different and uncontrived way. Indeed, the supplementary guidance does not seek a standardised design, rather it seeks a high standard of design which compliments the scale and style of the dwelling, its neighbours and wider local area. I therefore find no conflict with this guidance. Nor do I find any conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework.
13. For the reasons given, I find that the appeal proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host property or the wider area, with particular regard to scale, positioning and design.
14. Saved Policy 3.14C of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan states that development should have regard to relevant supplementary planning guidance. Saved Policy 3.14D of that development plan sets out a number of design principles that new development will be assessed against, which includes local character, street patterns, building lines, scale, design and massing. Furthermore, Policy PG3 of the Birmingham Development Plan 2031 expects, amongst other things, that all new development demonstrates a high quality, contributing to and reinforcing a strong and positive sense of place and local distinctiveness, with design that responds to site conditions and the local area context. In the absence of any harm, I find no conflict with any of these policies.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard time limit, a condition specifying the approved plans is necessary to provide certainty. I have imposed a condition specifying materials as this is necessary to safeguard the character and appearance of the host property and wider street scene.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions identified.

C Dillon

INSPECTOR