
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2020 by Hilary Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 15 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N2345/D/20/3254959

7 Frenchwood Knoll, Preston PR1 4LE

- 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 Misbah Mulla against the decision of Preston City Council.
 - The application Ref 06/2020/0134, dated 5 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is "erection of a single storey front extension with roof lanterns, single storey rear extension with lanterns, hip to gable roof, rear dormer extensions and 3 no roof lights to front and raising of ridge".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Council has no objections to the single storey front and rear extensions and indeed similar extensions been granted approval under previous and subsequent planning applications¹. I have no reason to disagree with the Council in this respect. My report therefore concentrates on the matters in dispute between the parties, namely the hip to gable roof alterations, rear dormer extensions and the proposed raising of ridge.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of 7 Frenchwood Knoll and surrounding area, and
 - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers at 6 and 8 Frenchwood Knoll.

Reasons

Character and appearance

¹ Application references 06/2019/0965 and 06/2020/0400

5. 7 Frenchwood Knoll is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling, lying in a predominantly residential area. It is constructed from brick and render with a slate roof. It is set a substantial distance back from the road in an elevated position in relation to it, with garaging and a parking area to the front. The area is characterised by semi-detached dwellings, many of which have been previously extended, but which due to the gradient of the land step down from each other.
6. The proposal would add an additional storey onto the property and would include a bedroom, en-suite and lounge area with Juliet balcony. It would result in an increase in height to the ridge line, the introduction of a rear second storey flat roofed extension and the change of the roof from a hip to a gable.
7. Due to the change from a hip to gable roof the proposal would result in a more dominant roof structure, and the increase in height would accentuate this. By replacing the existing hipped roof with a gable, both the front and rear elevations would appear bulky and incongruous, both in terms of the property itself and in the street scene. The flat roof element of the proposal on the rear elevation, although is not visible from public vantage points, would increase the massing of the building at roof level and introduce an uncharacteristic and bulky form. Accordingly, it would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would unbalance the visual appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings.
8. I note the appellant's contention that the appeal proposal is similar to that subsequently approved. From the information before me, it is clear that the appeal proposal would result in an increase in the height of the host dwelling, as well as introducing a flat roof element to the rear of the property. However, the approved scheme does not result in an increase in the height of the roof or increase the bulk and massing at the first and second floors of the rear elevation. The scale of the proposal remains subservient and the roof form reflects that of the existing building. In addition, even if some of the proposed alterations to the roof could constitute permitted development, such development would not be directly comparable to the appeal proposal in terms of its scale, massing and form. Accordingly, these matters carry limited weight in support of the proposal but do not outweigh the harm I have found to character and appearance.
9. I note that 6 Frenchwood Knoll has planning permission for an extension and increase in ridge height. I also noted at the site visit that this has not yet been constructed. However, due to the slope of the land, 6 Frenchwood Knoll sits at a lower level to the appeal property and therefore the increase in roof height would be less apparent in the street scene. Accordingly, it does not justify the appeal proposal.
10. The proposal would therefore harm the character and appearance of both the host property and surrounding area contrary to Policies AD1 (a) and EN9 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2015) and saved Policies D13 and H8 of the Preston Local Plan (2004), which seek to ensure, amongst other things that development is in keeping with and makes a positive contribution to, the character and appearance of the area as well as with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Living conditions

11. 8 Frenchwood Knoll is the adjoining semi-detached property. Whilst there is already a two storey outrigger to both properties, the proposed second floor extension would be an overbearing and dominant structure when viewed from the rear ground and first floor windows of neighbouring property, albeit at an oblique angle. In addition, as the dwelling is at a higher level than the neighbouring garden area, the extension would appear particularly dominant and overbearing when seen from within the garden. As such, whilst I acknowledge that the proposal would not reduce light or outlook from No 8, its domineering presence would detract from the quality of the living environment in and around that property and make it a less pleasant place to be. The proposal would have a similar dominant effect on the garden area of No 6.
12. I note the appellant's comments that there would be similar impacts on the neighbours' living conditions when compared to the approved scheme for extensions to the property². However, the proposal before me would result in an extension that would be substantially taller and bulkier than the approved scheme. Accordingly, it would have a more significant impact than the approved scheme.
13. For the above reasons the proposal would therefore harm the living conditions of occupiers of the neighbouring properties 6 and 8 Frenchwood Knoll contrary to Policy AD1 (a) of the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2015) and saved Policies D13 and H8 of the Preston Local Plan (2004) which seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development would not adversely impact on living conditions as well as with the Framework.

Other Matters

14. I have also been made aware of other nearby extensions and a relevant appeal decision by the appellant. The appeal relates to a scheme where the extant permission for a similar development was given significant weight as a material consideration. In this case however, the scheme before the appeal is substantially different to the approved scheme due to the increase in roof height and second storey addition. In any event, I have determined this appeal on its merits.
15. I have taken into account the personal circumstances of the appellant to provide additional accommodation for a large family, which carry limited weight in favour of the proposal. However, this does not outweigh the harm I have found to character and appearance and living conditions.
16. Whilst there are no formal objections from the current neighbours the Framework requires that development creates places that provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Hilary Senior

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

² Application Ref no. 06/2020/0400

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Susan Ashworth

INSPECTOR