



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 September 2020

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Tuesday, 29 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/20/3249249 2-3-4 South Terrace, Sawston CB22 3EL

- 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 Laura Montanini against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: S/3327/19/FL, dated 27 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is two storey extensions on each property aligned to the existing neighbours' extension. Single storey extension projecting to the same point of the existing extension. Existing porches of two of the properties widened. Materials, mainly render and slates, and alignment in keeping with the context.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council amended the description of the proposed development from 'the proposal comprises the development of three adjacent dwellings: A two storey extension on each property aligned to the existing neighbours' extension. A single storey extension projecting to the same point of the existing extension. On the front, the existing porches of two of the properties are widened to provide additional space. Materials, mainly render and slates, and alignment in keeping with the context. The street view is kept basically unchanged. More details and analysis of the impact are dealt in-depth in the Design and Access Statement' to 'two storey extensions on each property aligned to the existing neighbours' extension. Single storey extension projecting to the same point of the existing extension. Existing porches of two of the properties widened. Materials, mainly render and slates, and alignment in keeping with the context'.
3. The revised description has also been used by the appellant on the appeal form. I consider that this represents a more succinct summary of the proposed development and have therefore proceeded on this basis.
4. I have been provided with the plans originally submitted with the planning application. However, the application was subsequently amended, and it was these plans on which the Council based its decision. The appellant's Statement of Case confirms that it is the amended plans that are the subject of this appeal.

5. I have also been provided with plans that show further revisions to the proposed development. However, I note from the appellant's Final Comments that these have been provided for my information. I have therefore proceeded on this basis.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

7. The appeal site consists of three terraced houses. This terrace also includes 1 South Terrace, which has previously been the subject of a two-storey rear extension. Adjacent to this terrace are comparable terraces comprising the dwellings of 5-8 and 9-12 South Terrace. The road also contains several other dwellings. It also leads to a car park and some open space.
8. By reason of its design, the proposed rear extension would be higher than the height of the existing dwellings. This means that the proposed development would not represent a subordinate addition to the existing dwellings. On account of the layout of South Terrace, the extension would be clearly visible by reason of its greater height when compared to the existing houses. This means that the proposed extension would be visible from the gap between Nos. 4 and 5.
9. In addition, owing to the design of the proposed extension, a roof slope would be visible over the height of the existing dwellings in the middle of the terrace. This feature would also disrupt the linear character of Nos. 1-4.
10. As the appeal site is located near to the end of South Terrace, it is visible for a significant distance of this road. Furthermore, South Terrace leads to a car park and some open space. These factors give the appeal site a greater degree of prominence. This means that the development would have a notable adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area given the contrast between the design of the proposed development and traditional forms of architecture notable elsewhere within South Terrace.
11. Whilst I have noted the presence of different extensions and alterations within the existing dwellings, these do not have the same proportions as the appeal scheme. Accordingly, they are not visible from South Terrace. In result, they do not have the same effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding areas as the appeal proposal would have.
12. My attention has been drawn to the Sawston Village Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2020) (the Village Design Guide). Whilst not cited in the Council's reason for the refusal of planning permission, I note that the document states that new development should draw upon the form of Sawston's buildings. Owing to the height and roof shape protruding above the ridge of the proposed development when viewed from South Terrace, the development would not reflect the traditional form of architecture that defines dwellings in this section of the road.
13. Although the proposed development would not be visible from the car park at the end of South Terrace, this does not overcome the adverse effects emanating from the views of the development from other points in the road.

14. The proposed extension would be visible from several rear elevations and gardens within the wider area. However, the development, in this regard, would be viewed alongside the context of the neighbouring terraces at Nos. 5-8 and 9-12. These feature a number of alterations to the rear. Furthermore, there are some rear extensions and alterations present within the existing terrace at Nos. 1-4. In consequence, the proposed development would be viewed against a context of differing architectural styles. Therefore, the proposed development, in this particular regard, would not result in an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
15. I note that the proposed development would be visible from the open space near to South Terrace. However, such views would be relatively fleeting owing to the separation distances and the presence of significant amounts of landscaping. Accordingly, the development would not lead to a notable adverse effect on the character and appearance of this area.
16. The proposed development also includes the provision of new porches. A notable proportion of dwellings in South Terrace feature porches of a variety of designs and proportions. As a result of this variety, the proposed porches would not have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In addition, had I been minded to allow this appeal, I could have imposed a condition that could have controlled the materials from which the porches would be constructed from.
17. My attention has been drawn to a number of developments in the surrounding area. I do not have the full information regarding their planning circumstances, which lessens the amount of weight that I can attribute to them. However, I note that the various extensions are generally of different designs and, in some instances, are located on dwellings that have a different form to the appeal site. This means that they do not have the same level of prominence, or effects, as the scheme before me would have. Accordingly, I do not believe that the presence of developments elsewhere would require me to disregard my previous concerns.
18. I am also aware of other buildings within the wider area that feature different roof shapes. However, these buildings are located in areas where there appears to be greater variety in building form. This contrasts with the appeal scheme as the proposal would erode the character of a terrace of dwellings.
19. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development, in this regard, would conflict with Policies HQ/1 and S/7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018); the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2010); and the Village Design Guide. These, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that new developments be compatible with their location and be appropriate in terms of form, design and proportion; be of a scale appropriate to the location; and sustain, enhance and preserve the quality of the built environment.

Other Matters

20. I have given the personal circumstances of the appellant careful consideration. However, I am mindful that in general, planning decisions need to be taken in the public interest. Therefore, I can only give this matter a limited amount of weight.

21. I acknowledge comments raised by the appellant regarding the manner in which the Council considered the planning application. However, in considering the appeal, I have limited my assessment to the planning matters before me.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

22. Whilst I have found that the proposed porches would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, this does not outweigh the harm arising from the form of the rear extension. Therefore, for the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR