
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 October 2020

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/D/20/3257385
3 Evesham Close, Southampton SO16 3PG

- 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 L Walford against the decision of Southampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00657/FUL, dated 20 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey side extension, roof alterations including front and rear dormers to provide additional first floor accommodation, raised deck to rear elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr L Walford against Southampton City Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matter

3. I have taken the description of development from the appeal form and decision notice, since this more accurately describes the proposal than that on the application form.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of 6 Grendon Close, with particular reference to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal property comprises a modest, detached, two-storey dwelling. The first-floor accommodation is contained within a steeply pitched roof incorporating flat-roofed side dormers. There are flat-roofed single storey projections to both sides.

6. The site is located near the turning head of a short cul-de-sac of 6 properties, within a suburban residential area. The appeal property comprises one of 3 similarly designed dwellings on one side of the road. On the opposite side of the road there are also 3 similarly designed dwellings of a different character to that of the appeal property. The open-plan nature of the site frontages means that the regularity of design across each side of the road is a visible and strong defining feature of the townscape within the close.
7. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document *Residential Design Guide 2006* (RDG) requires extensions to be subordinate to the original dwelling, be smaller than the main part of the house and not dominate its appearance. It states that extensions that are too big can make the house look lopsided or unbalanced and can break the visual continuity of the street of which it is a part. It also states that dormer windows should be in keeping with the house and the roof form, and that the addition of dormers should not dominate visually the existing roof.
8. The proposal incorporates changes to the previous dismissed appeal scheme, including a reduction in the height and massing of the roof extension and changes to the size and design of the proposed dormers. I find that these amendments have not overcome the concerns of the previous Inspector in respect of the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.
9. The development would amount to a significant first floor enlargement of the dwelling, so that the first floor would extend across the width of the building. The proposed cropped hipped roof form would be out of keeping with the pitched roof design which characterises the existing building. Whilst the proposed roof ridge would be set down below that of the main roof, the roof extension would be visually dominant and would appear incongruous in relation to the existing property.
10. The unsympathetic relationship with the host property would be exacerbated by the proposed front and rear first floor windows, which would take up a large proportion of the roof slopes, and would draw attention to the extension and increase its visual prominence. The rear dormer would appear particularly incongruous, over-dominant and top-heavy within the extended roof space, due to a combination of its length, depth and height, close proximity to the roof ridge, eaves and edges, and lack of consistency with the design of the existing rear elevation fenestration.
11. Notwithstanding the position of the property at the end of the cul-de-sac, the proposal would be visible from the public realm of the street, including to occupants of the road and their visitors, and users of the footpath which leads off the head of the cul-de-sac. The proposal would harm the visual amenities of the area by introducing a visibly discordant and obtrusive element to the aforementioned regular design form which characterises this side of the close. As such, it would fail to integrate successfully into the street scene.
12. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Saved Policies SDP1 and SDP7 of the *City of Southampton Local Plan Review, as amended 2015* (Local Plan) and sections 2.3.2 and 2.5.4 of the RDG. These policies and guidance, amongst other aims, require new development to be of a high quality design,

respect the scale and proportion of existing buildings, take account of the existing character of the surrounding area, and, in the case of dormer windows, not dominate visually the existing roof.

13. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Policies of the *National Planning Policy Framework 2019* (the Framework) which seek to secure high quality design as set out in Chapter 12.

Living conditions

14. The proposal would introduce an additional first floor rear elevation bedroom window within about 19.2 metres of the rear elevation of 6 Grendon Close, which backs onto the appeal site. This rear separation distance would be less than the minimum of 21 metres stipulated in the RDG. However, there is already a large first floor bedroom window on the rear elevation of the appeal property, and the proposed additional rear first floor window would not be sited closer to No.6 than the existing window. Given these circumstances, I find that the proposal would not significantly impact on the privacy of the occupiers of No.6 in respect of overlooking to the rear habitable room windows of that property.
15. My conclusion on this matter is consistent with that of the previous appeal Inspector in respect of the dismissed scheme, which included a larger rear first floor dormer than that of the current appeal scheme, in the same position on the building.
16. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not result in a materially harmful impact on the privacy of the occupiers of 6 Grendon Close. In this respect, the appeal scheme would accord with Local Plan Saved Policy SDP1, in so far as this policy seeks to ensure that new development does not unacceptably affect the amenity of the city and its citizens.
17. This is generally consistent with the Framework, which seeks to ensure that developments will function well and promote a high standard of amenity, health and well-being for existing and future users (paragraph 127).

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Leonard

INSPECTOR