



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 27 October 2020

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F2415/D/20/3254989

Corner Cottage, Goadby Road, Glooston, LE16 7SS

- 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 W Farmer against the decision of Harborough District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00309/FUL, dated 28 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is an extension to the dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and the effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, with respect to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is one of a pair of traditional, red brick semi-detached cottages standing at the corner of two roads in the village of Glooston. The dwelling has a long, single storey extension to the rear which runs alongside the road. The proposed extension would extend out from the main body of the building to a depth of some 6 metres and would span virtually its full width. The part of the single storey extension which extends beyond this depth would be reconstructed to the same dimensions.
4. My attention is drawn to planning permission granted by the Council for a similar development in 2019 (Council Ref: 19/01425/FUL). The schemes differ principally in respect of the first floor of the extension, the inner part of which would extend to a depth of 4m rather than 6m, with the hipped roof above altered to reflect the stepped arrangement. I have had regard to the approved scheme as a material consideration given the fall-back position it affords the appellant.
5. Policy GD3 of the Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 (April 2019) (the HLP) permits minor extensions to dwellings in the countryside that are subordinate in scale and appearance to the original dwelling. Though not cited in the Council's reasons for refusal, the Council identifies conflict with this policy in its delegated report and I consider it relevant to the proposal.

6. The appeal scheme would create a substantially larger building than exists on the site. The proposed extension would be deeper than the original main building with a flat, full width elevation at the rear first floor level that would oversail and subsume the existing single storey extension below. The massing and prominence of the extension would be added to by an expansive, homogenous roof structure above. The box-like shape of the extension would lack articulation or subordination beyond a token reduction in the ridge height compared to the main roof. It would visibly and physically dominate the original dwelling, the scale and form of which would no longer be discernible. The size of the extension would also result in a significant and discordant imbalance between the semi-detached pair with little sense of their original consistency remaining.
7. I saw at my visit that despite the presence of the long, single storey extension to the rear, the massing of the proposed extension would be clearly visible above it from Cranoe Road to the side of the site. Also, contrary to the appellant's assertion, the extension would be clearly seen at close range from the neighbouring garden of South Cottage as the existing single storey extension would offer only partial screening from the areas immediately next to the dwelling and the low fence on the boundary would offer no screening. As such, the proposal would have a significant harmful visual impact.
8. I acknowledge that the approved scheme would also significantly alter the original scale and form of the dwelling. However, the approved scheme includes a step in the first floor rear elevation which provides visible articulation in line with the single storey extension below, breaking up the massing of both the rear façade and roof structure. Relative to the present scheme, the visual impact of the fallback scheme is softened by incorporating this important element of articulation and subordination into the design. Consequently, I find that the fallback scheme when compared with the scheme now before me would not present an equivalent or greater degree of harm to the character and appearance of the area, and it would not justify the appeal proposal.
9. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with the aforementioned requirements of Policy GD3 of the HLP, and with Policy GD8 which seeks a high standard of design in new development.

Living Conditions

10. The adjoining property, South Cottage, has a single storey, half-width extension to the rear, indicated to reach 3.8 metres in height. The proposed extension would protrude marginally beyond the depth of the neighbouring extension, but it would stand significantly taller at some 6.9 metres to the ridge of the roof.
11. The massing of the extension would be visible from the upper floor window of the neighbouring dwelling above the roof of the single storey extension. I note that the position of the extension to the north means it would not lead to a harmful loss of light to this neighbouring window. It is also indicated that the extension would not breach the 45° line from this window, which refers to guidance of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5 (March 2003) (the SPG). However, the SPG indicates this guidance is applied flexibly, depending upon the physical circumstances of the site and its surroundings.

12. I recognise that the position and form of the existing extension to South Cottage reduces the degree to which the proposed extension would alter the outlook for neighbouring occupants. Outlook from the ground floor windows would not be demonstrably affected given their position close to the extension. However, due to the substantial difference in height between the existing and proposed extensions, the latter would form an imposing and dominant structure which would loom over the top of the extension to South Cottage, and would have a noticeable enclosing effect on the outlook from the upper floor window. The expansive walls and roof of the extension would also overbear on the rear garden of the neighbouring property, including on the patio area immediately to the rear, which occupants would be expected to use for sitting out and which would harm their outlook.
13. Under the fallback scheme, the depth of the extension facing the neighbouring property would be 4 metres compared to 6 metres. I recognise it would still be a large structure which would exceed the height of the extension to South Cottage, but its reduced depth of wall and roof immediately on the boundary would by comparison result in a less overbearing structure when viewed from the neighbouring window and rear garden. Therefore, I find that the fallback scheme would have less impact on neighbours' living conditions than the scheme before me, and would not be justification for allowing the proposal.
14. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, contrary to Policy GD8 of the HLP, which requires proposals to be designed to minimise impact on the amenity of existing and future residents by not having a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of existing and new residents through loss of privacy, overshadowing and overbearing impact.

Other Matters

15. No harm was identified in respect of the effect on highway safety, and nothing I have seen or read in evidence leads me to a different view. However, this is a neutral factor weighing neither for nor against the proposal.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given, the proposal would result in conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole. Material considerations in this case do not lead me to conclude that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K. Savage

INSPECTOR