



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 1 April 2021

by Mr Andrew Smith BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/20/3260175

16 Horselers, Hemel Hempstead HP3 9UH

- 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 Mansoor Akram against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01587/FHA, dated 18 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as: 'A 4.5m ground floor rear extension along with a dormer which will be positioned on the rear of the property facing the garden with 3 windows.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the description of development as it appears on the Council's Decision Notice and on the appeal form, as opposed to as stated upon the application form. This is because it is comprehensive and correctly references that a first-floor side extension makes up part of the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area; and
 - The effect upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at No 18 Horselers (No 18), having particular regard to potential visual intrusion.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a modern semi-detached dwelling that has previously been extended through additions to the front, side and rear. It makes up part of a row of often similarly designed and consistently laid out properties positioned to Horselers' northern side (the row). These properties are typically setback from the highway and located upon generously sized plots. Thus, a spacious and somewhat formal residential character and appearance is in place local to the site.
5. The Council has indicated that, from their perspective, the proposed first-floor side extension would have an acceptable effect when viewed from Horselers. I have no reason to dispute this finding. Indeed, the intended side extension

- would enlarge an existing addition and simplify the appearance of the property's frontage. Being of relatively narrow width, it would not appear as an unduly prominent addition to the Horselers streetscene.
6. However, it is how the proposal would be experienced to the rear of the property that raises concern. The proposed ground floor rear extension (the rear extension) would add bulk to the host dwelling and cover a not insignificant footprint. Its intended rear building line would fail to closely respect the usual extents of other properties contained within the row, which is typically comprised of dwellings that closely resemble their original form.
 7. The rear extension's mono-pitched roof design would lead to an amalgamation of different roof forms being in place to the property's rear. Indeed, when considered in conjunction with a generously sized flat-roofed two-storey rear addition (the two-storey rear addition) that is already in place and further additions now intended at roof level, the rear extension would promote the host dwelling appearing as excessively sized and of disjointed composition. This is notwithstanding any reductions made to the scheme at planning application stage.
 8. I acknowledge that the rear extension would occupy a relatively discreet location in the sense that potential visibility from publicly accessible vantage points would be limited, at best. Nevertheless, even when noting the existence of screening to the site's rear boundary, the rear extension would be visible, at least in-part, from a range of privately accessible residential vantage points.
 9. For the above reasons, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. The proposal conflicts with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (September 2013) (the Core Strategy) and Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004) in so far as these policies require that development should enhance general character and respect adjoining properties in terms of layout, site coverage, scale and bulk.

Living conditions

10. The rear extension would be sited adjacent to the shared boundary with No 18. However, in-part owing to the existence of the two-storey rear addition, it would not be set in immediate proximity to any rear-facing opening that serves No 18. Indeed, even when considered in conjunction with the two-storey rear addition, I am content that the proposed works would appear neither overbearing nor visually intrusive when experienced from the grounds of No 18. This is particularly so when noting the intended single storey height of the rear extension.
11. For the avoidance of doubt, the works that are proposed to the side of the appeal property would also avoid having an overbearing influence. Indeed, it was observable upon inspection that window openings located to No 18's eastern side elevation already have a direct and close relationship with the appeal property's existing side addition.
12. For the above reasons, the proposal would not cause harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at No 18 having particular regard to potential visual intrusion. The proposal accords with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy in so far as it sets out that development should avoid visual intrusion.

Other Matters

13. I have noted objections/concerns raised by interested parties with respect to matters including land stability, loss of light, parking and the potential for multi-occupancy. However, as I have found the proposal to be unacceptable for other reasons, it is not necessary for me to explore these matters further here. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole, and material considerations do not lead me to a decision otherwise.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Smith

INSPECTOR