



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 25 May 2021

by Rachel Hall BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4625/D/21/3269177

476 Warwick Road, Solihull B91 1AG

- 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 and Mrs Renshaw against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2020/02375/MINFHO, dated 5 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is a 'loft conversion and vertical extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is one of a number of semi-detached houses on this side of Warwick Road which each have a high degree of symmetry with their adjoining neighbour. The houses are set back from the road behind front driveways but many, including the appeal site, are clearly visible from the road and pavements on Warwick Road. The hipped roof of the appeal site is also the prevalent style in the immediately surrounding area. This, together with the symmetry between adjoining houses, is a key feature of the character and appearance of the building and local area.
4. The scale of the proposed side extension and associated alteration to the roof profile would unbalance the appearance of the pair of houses, removing this sense of symmetry. The proposed roof on the side extension would appear at odds with the roof designs of nearby houses, being neither a true hipped roof nor a gable end.
5. Accepting that visibility of the rear extension would be limited due to mature landscaping and trees, from the rear garden of the house and in any glimpsed views from neighbouring gardens, the extension would appear as a three-storey building. This would appear out of character with the predominance of two storey buildings in the area. The more traditional appearance of the rear of the building at first floor level, including the hipped roof and symmetrical chimney, would be subsumed by the substantial alterations proposed. This would detract from the character and appearance of the building.

6. The Appellants have provided a photograph of an example of a property with a far less sympathetic extension which I also saw on my site visit. However this relates to a detached house where symmetry with an adjoining neighbour is not a consideration. In any event the presence of other roof extensions in the area does not justify the harm I have identified, and each proposal must be determined on its own merits.
7. In addition to the above, I have had regard to a proposed loft extension from 2012 which relates to the appeal building and does not appear to have been implemented. No other details relating to the nature of any approval of that proposal are before me, nor is it addressed within the Council's officer report.
8. Nevertheless the design from 2012, whilst substantial, appears slightly more sympathetic to the design of the existing building and retains more of its character, including the hipped roof to the rear of the building. Consequently, I consider that proposal's effect on the character and appearance of the building would be less than the proposal before me.
9. Finally, I acknowledge the benefit to the Appellants and their family from extending their home, including in relation to the bathroom. However neither the 2012 proposal nor this benefit provides for a compelling reason why planning permission should be granted for an otherwise unacceptable development.
10. For the above reasons I conclude that the development would harm the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy P15 of the Solihull Local Plan (2013) which amongst other matters seeks to achieve good quality design that conserves and enhances local character.

Conclusion

11. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding area in conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rachel Hall

INSPECTOR