



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 12 July 2021

by Ian Radcliffe BSc(Hons) MRTPI MCIEH DMS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/D/21/3271932

50 Church Street, Helmdon, Northamptonshire NN13 5QJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant prior approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA, Paragraph AA.2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Mr T Beckett against the decision of South Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref S/2021/0028/HPA, dated 13 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2021. The development proposed is a first floor extension to existing bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (the GPDO), planning permission is granted for the enlargement of a dwellinghouse by the construction of additional storeys subject to limitations and conditions.
3. Paragraph AA.3(3) provides that the local planning authority may refuse an application for prior approval of such a development where it considers that the proposal does not comply with the conditions, limitations or restrictions that are applicable to such permitted development. Paragraph AA.2(3) includes a condition that requires the local planning authority, amongst other matters, to decide whether to grant prior approval for the external appearance of the dwellinghouse, including the design and architectural features of its principal elevation and any side elevation that fronts a highway.
4. As part of the site visit I saw that the dwelling appears to have a first floor extension which is nearing completion. A plan showing the elevations of the bungalow before this extension was started was not submitted with the application. However, I have been provided by the Council with a copy of a plan of the bungalow which accompanied a similar application that sought prior approval last year. It is against this plan that I have assessed the proposed first floor extension that is the subject of this appeal.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the external appearance of the dwellinghouse.

Reasons

6. Helmdon is a small, rural village characterised along Church Street by linear residential development with development in depth limited to occasional cul-de-sacs. There is a mix of housing from different eras. The oldest buildings in the immediate area along Church Street are adjacent to the appeal property on its northern side and are set on the back edge of the pavement. In contrast the appeal property and the dwellings on its southern side and opposite are twentieth century buildings, predominantly houses, set back from the street behind front gardens and driveways.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') seeks good design and advises that new development, amongst other matters, should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and sympathetic to local character.
8. One of the defining features of the dwellings along the length of this long street is that almost all have gable ends. The few, isolated examples of hipped roof dwellings are of early to mid-twentieth century, semi-detached, suburban style houses that are too few and far between to alter this notable feature of the character and appearance of the street.
9. The bungalow, as shown on the submitted plan, is gable ended. It also includes a forward projecting gable within the front elevation. To its side, attached by a flat roofed link, is a single garage. On the basis of what I saw remains of this building the bungalow was faced with local stone. As a result, it is keeping with the local vernacular.
10. The proposed extension would add a first floor to the bungalow by raising its external walls to double the floor area of the main part of the dwelling. The inclusion of a circular window at first floor level within the front elevation, in itself, would not be problematic as it would add some variety and interest to the dwelling. However, in combination with the change in roof form from gable ended to hipped the overall effect would be of a large, detached, executive style house whose front elevation would appear unduly suburban and contrived. As a result, its appearance would be out of keeping with the building and streetscene and harmful to both. The use of local stone, retention of the projecting gable at first floor level and the inclusion of a dormer, whilst sympathetic to local features, would not overcome the harm caused. The proposed development would therefore not constitute good design as sought by the Framework.
11. Reference has been made to a hipped roof being less overbearing to the occupiers of the house at No 48 which is orientated at a right angle to No 50. However, I note that the flank wall of the dwelling at No 50 only extends across a small part of the front elevation of No 48. Moreover, the occupiers have not objected in this regard, nor has the LPA refused prior approval for the development on the grounds of harm in relation to related amenity matters such as loss of light. As a consequence, this consideration does not support the gable ended design of the proposal.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that by virtue of its design the external appearance of the proposed first floor extension would cause

unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the building and the area. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian Radcliffe

Inspector