



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 3 August 2021

by G Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E2734/D/21/3278255

2 Westminster Gate, Burn Bridge, HG3 1LU

- 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 & Mrs Gooden against the decision of Harrogate Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00925/FUL, dated 6 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2021.
 - The development proposed was initially described as '*alterations including raised roof to side extension blocks to provide extended first floor accommodation, and construction and new entrance porch*'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the increase in roof height to garage and single storey extension with extension of roof and dormers to provide additional first floor accommodation and erection of entrance porch at 2 Westminster Gate, Burn Bridge, HG3 1LU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00925/FUL, dated 6 March 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 001; 002 Rev D; 003 Rev D; and 004.
 - 3) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have adopted the development description as set out on the Council's decision notice as opposed to that set out on the planning application form and the banner above, as it more concisely describes what is proposed. I am satisfied that in doing so neither party would be disadvantaged, and I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within a residential area of mixed architectural style and of varying house size. The appeal property, and its immediate neighbour at 44 Westminster Drive, are somewhat unusual in the context of Westminster Gate, Westminster Drive and Westminster Crescent in that they are dormer bungalows rather than 2-storey dwellings. In both instances, their roofscapes are dominated by large flat roofed 'box' dormers with strong horizontal emphases. The appeal property is also distinctively 'bookended' by two peaked, gable fronted 'wings'.
5. The proposal would bring the two 'wings' more squarely into the main body of the house with linking roof elements from the main roof, as well as increasing the eaves height and overall height of both elements. The dormer window structures would also be extended in width, to both front and rear, but would retain their current strong horizontal emphasis.
6. Whilst these works would increase the massing of the building overall, particularly at roof level, it would do so in a manner that would remain true to the appeal property's existing character and layout. Nor, I am satisfied, would the resulting alterations be out of proportion with the equally strong horizontal emphasis of the main house and its roof, whilst also ensuring that neither 'wing' would exceed the highest point of the existing house.
7. It is true that the extensions to the 'wings' would increase the scale and massing of those elements, and also alter their relationship with the main house. However, I am satisfied that the extended property would nevertheless read as a well-designed, well-proportioned, yet distinctive, coherent whole, rather than the incongruous and disruptive dwelling that the Council fears.
8. I accept that timber cladding is not particularly typical of the surrounding area's architectural character or palette of materials. However, it is not totally without precedent, as evidenced by the two nearby examples cited by the appellant. Moreover, there is sufficient variation in the proportion of brick to render on properties in the surrounding area to demonstrate that there is a mix of materials present. Thus, the use of timber cladding to the upper portions of the extended elements of the building would reflect local variety in building materials whilst also usefully serving to provide interest to the front-facing gable peaks of the two extended 'wings' and their flank elevations.
9. The enlarged peaked gable of the garage 'wing' would project forward of the house's main front elevation, roof slope and dormer window, as indeed it already does. But the impact of this, and the enlargement of the other 'wing', in longer views along the street would be largely mitigated by the property's relationship with neighbouring property. Thus, the additional height of the lengthy flank elevations would be largely hidden by the neighbouring building at No. 4, when viewed from one side, and by the higher ground levels and substantial evergreen hedge that separates the appeal property from No. 44, on the other. Both neighbouring properties provide a substantial backdrop to the extensions which are also seen with those properties as substantial backdrop features.
10. The appellant is correct in identifying that the appeal site lies at a low point within the street. That, together with the slight curve in the street and the nature of the appeal building's relationship with the houses on either side of it,

is such that the extended property would not appear as an incongruous or visually intrusive feature within the street scene, nor would it be harmful to the area's character or appearance. Rather, it would capture the varied and evolving character, appearance and nature of properties within the surrounding area and would add a contemporary twist to the existing property.

11. The proposed porch, although large, would similarly reflect the contemporary design approach adopted elsewhere within the scheme and would, with other elements of the scheme, update and modernise No. 2's appearance. The proposal would alter the property's relationship with the wider street but I do not share the Council's concern about its prominence within the street, or the extent to which an increased prominence would be harmful.
12. For reasons I have outlined therefore, I consider that the proposal would not adversely impact upon the character or appearance of the appeal property, or that of the surrounding area. It is agreed that there is no one particular architectural style that defines either Westminster Gate or the surrounding streets, but the proposal would nevertheless respect the layout of the properties and the space about and between buildings whilst adopting a contemporary design approach and distinctive materials. The result would be a distinctive form of extension which reflects the form and character of the host building without causing harm to either its character or appearance, or that of the surrounding area. I am satisfied that there would be no conflict with Local Plan policies HP3 or HS8, or the aims and principles of the Council's '*House Extensions & Garages Design Guide*' Supplementary Planning Document.

Conditions

13. I have considered the conditions set out by the Council in the appeal questionnaire in the light of the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. I agree that time limit and approved plans conditions are necessary and reasonable in the interests of good planning and in order to provide certainty.
14. The appellant's general approach to the range of materials is set out in broad terms on the submitted plans, but a materials condition is nevertheless both reasonable and necessary. However, the Council's suggested condition regarding the use of matching materials would not wholly reflect the appellant's approach to the extension's design, particularly with regard to the proposed use of timber cladding. I have therefore imposed a slightly different materials condition, requiring submission of, and agreement to, the proposed materials but I am satisfied that in doing so neither party would be unduly or materially disadvantaged by this approach.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

G Robbie

INSPECTOR