



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 23 August 2021

by Mark Ollerenshaw BSc (Hons) MTPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T3725/D/21/3273933

12 Helmsdale Road, Lillington, Leamington Spa CV32 7DW

- 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 Michael Welti against the decision of Warwick District Council.
 - The application Ref W/20/1856, dated 11 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'the proposal is to provide a 'hip to gable' loft conversion to main dwelling roof which includes providing a gable to the roof to the existing 2 storey side extension. A box dormer is to be provided to the rear roof overlooking the rear garden. Materials are to match the existing construction'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 20 July 2021, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. The revised Framework does not materially alter the national policy approach in respect of the issues raised in this appeal. Since their cases would not be prejudiced, I have not consulted the main parties on the revised Framework. I have referred to the revised Framework in my findings below.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is one half of a two storey semi-detached pair of dwellings situated on the north-west side of Helmsdale Road within a residential area. The existing property includes a two storey side and rear extension. In common with many properties on the road, the appeal site has a front garden and driveway with low level boundary treatment and planting, and a larger rear garden.
5. The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by two storey semi-detached dwellings of similar design featuring hipped roofs. Though many of the properties along Helmsdale Road have been extended, there is a strong sense of symmetry partly due to the broadly even spaces between properties and their hipped roofs. Together with the planting in the front gardens, verges and street trees, this positively contributes to a harmonious and verdant

character to the area which, in my view, it is reasonable to accord appropriate protection to.

6. The proposed hip to gable extension to the roof of both the original roof slope and the roof of the two storey side extension would change the roof shape of the property, contrary to guidance contained in the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which advises against introducing a gabled roof extension to an existing semi-detached hipped roof dwelling.
7. Although the semi-detached pair of properties at Nos 12 and 14 is already unbalanced to some extent by the existing two storey extension to the side of the host property, the proposed hip to gable enlargement would further emphasize this unbalanced appearance by increasing the bulk of the roof structure of the host property. The proposed hip to gable extension would also disrupt the largely uniform roofscape on this side of Helmsdale Road and would therefore be an incongruous feature in the street scene.
8. Whilst the proposed dormer would be set in from the side boundaries and set down slightly from the main ridge, it would extend across almost the whole width of the rear roof slope, including the proposed gable roof, which is also contrary to advice in the SPD. Due to its positioning on the rear roof slope, the proposed dormer would not be prominent within the street scene of Helmsdale Road. However, it would be visible from the rear of the appeal property and from neighbouring gardens and would appear as a dominant addition and further distort the symmetry of the semi-detached pair.
9. The appellants have referred me to a hip to gable extension at 9 Helmsdale Road on the other side of the road from the appeal site, which I viewed during my site visit. In that case the gable roof appears to have been constructed over the original hipped roof. In contrast, the appeal proposal would see a hip to gable enlargement to both the original roof structure and the roof of the two storey side extension and would therefore have a greater impact on the symmetry of the semi-detached pair of which it forms part.
10. Although the appellants have referred to other examples of similar extensions existing nearby, I do not have the full details of these other developments before me. As a result, whilst having due regard to these other properties as a material consideration in determining this appeal, I have assessed the appeal scheme on its own merits in accordance with the requirements of the current development plan and the other examples do not justify the harm I have identified.
11. The appellants also argue that a fallback position exists whereby a hip to gable extension can take place without the benefit of planning permission, which they argue would result in a very similar impact on the street scene when compared to the appeal proposal. Bearing in mind the existing two storey side extension to the property, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that a hip to gable extension could be carried out under permitted development rights or what form it would take. I have no lawful development certificate before me and have not been provided with any plans or details of any proposals to compare against the appeal proposal. I therefore give limited weight to this consideration.

12. I therefore conclude on this main issue that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policy BE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan (2017), Policy RLS2 of the Royal Leamington Spa Neighbourhood Development Plan (2020) and the advice contained in the Council's Residential Design SPD. In summary, and amongst other things, these require development to positively contribute to the character and quality of the environment through good layout and design. The proposal would also conflict with paragraph 130 of the Framework, which, amongst other things, requires development to be sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

13. Whilst I appreciate that the proposal would provide enlarged accommodation for the appellants without extending the footprint of the property, I am not persuaded that this would outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the property and its surroundings as identified above.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework, and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mark Ollerenshaw

INSPECTOR