



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 21 September 2021

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 October 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/21/3276209

67 Whitecroft Road, Meldreth SG8 6LS

- 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 Mrs Joanna Venn against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00690/HFUL, dated 15 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 27 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension and raising of roof ridge height for the addition of bedrooms within roof shape.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the development upon the living conditions of the occupiers of 65 Whitecroft Road, with particular reference to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site consists of a bungalow located near to several other bungalows. The appellant's dwelling and others nearby are arranged in a predominantly linear pattern. The boundaries of the appeal site are marked by wooden fences. Whilst dwellings are constructed to different designs, there is some uniformity in terms of building heights.
4. The proposed development would result in an increase in the height of the dwelling. This would contrast with the height of the neighbouring dwellings, which would appear to be much smaller than the appellant's dwelling. This means that the proposed development would appear discordant when viewed from the surrounding street. This effect would occur irrespective of the retention of the existing dwelling's roof slope and the differing setbacks of dwellings from the highway edge.
5. This is a concern given that the proposed development would be particularly prominent. In particular, views of the development would be possible from several public areas, in addition to neighbouring properties. In consequence,

the proposed development would be particularly strident. In addition, the height of the development would mean that the full projection of the rear extension would be readily perceptible from the street. This would also render the development incongruous.

6. Owing to the topography of the surrounding area, the layout of the appellant's property and neighbouring dwellings, it would not be possible to screen the proposed development through matters such as landscaping and additional boundary treatments.
7. My attention has been drawn to an extension at 51 Whitecroft Road. However, this extension is viewed against a backdrop of dense planting and, as such, does not have the same effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area as it appears to be separate from some other dwellings in the vicinity.
8. I have also been referred to other developments within the surrounding area. I do not have the full information regarding the planning circumstances of these, which lessens the weight that I can attribute to them. Nonetheless, I note that these have been constructed to different forms and layouts to the scheme before me.
9. Furthermore, some of the existing developments would have been assessed against the requirements of different planning policies and guidance. I therefore do not find that the presence of developments elsewhere allows me to disregard my previous concerns.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development, in this regard, would conflict with Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) (the Local Plan). Amongst other matters, this seeks to ensure that new developments preserve or enhance the character of the local area; and be compatible with its location.

Living conditions

11. The appeal site consists of a dwelling, which would be near to the existing bungalow at No. 65. The proposed development would extend the dwelling closer to the shared boundary between the two dwellings and to the rear of the dwelling.
12. By reason of this arrangement, the proposed development would result in an enclosing effect upon the side windows of the neighbouring dwelling, which would result in a loss of outlook for the existing occupiers. Given that the evidence before me is indicative that some of these windows serve rooms that are likely to be used with a great degree of frequency, the loss of outlook would be particularly significant.
13. Owing to the lack of outlook, the residents of the neighbouring dwelling would experience a significant erosion of their living conditions.
14. It has been suggested that an extension could be erected under permitted development rights, which would be a similar distance from the existing side windows. I have no reason to believe that such an extension could not be erected under permitted development rights.

15. However, the proposed extension would have a significant projection into the rear garden and would therefore have a greater massing and form than an extension that would be erected under permitted development rights. In consequence, this would lead to a further loss of outlook to the neighbouring dwelling's occupiers. In consequence, this suggestion does not overcome my previous concerns.
16. The proposed extension might be constructed so as to finish flush with the rear of No. 65. However, the proposed projection would contribute to an enclosing effect on the neighbouring property's existing windows. Furthermore, the appeal proposal would have a greater height than the neighbouring property. This means that the proposed extension would have a greater adverse effect than the existing development.
17. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property. The development, in this regard, would conflict with Local Plan Policy HQ/1. Amongst other matters, this requires that developments protect the amenity of occupiers and surrounding uses.

Other Matters

18. The appeal proposal would provide improved living conditions for the occupiers of the appeal site. Whilst this is a matter of note, I am conscious that, in general, planning decisions need to be made in the public interest. Therefore, I do not find that this outweighs my findings in respect of the main issues.
19. I acknowledge efforts made by the appellant in attempting to reduce the effects of the proposed development. However, this is only one of all the matters that must be considered and therefore, this does not overcome my previous conclusions.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

20. The proposal would have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would impinge upon the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property.
21. The scheme would therefore conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR

