
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2021

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/D/21/3280364

Robins, Salters Lane, Lower Moor, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 2PQ

- 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 Eric Christiansen against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01081/HP, dated 23 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is a 2 storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The postcode I have used above is taken from the Council's decision notice and the appeal form. The postcode cited on the application form for the 'site address' relates to a different address in the centre of Evesham, which is clearly incorrect.

Background

3. There is an extant planning permission¹ for a two-storey side extension that would extend up to the shared boundary with the adjacent property 'Rowan House'. The approved extension would be set back from the front elevation of the dwelling, and the height of the roof ridge of the extension would be set down lower than the roof ridge of the host dwelling.
4. The appeal proposal before me differs in that the roof of the extension would be the same height as the roof of the host dwelling, and not stepped down.
5. From the evidence before me I find there is more than a theoretical possibility that the extant planning permission described above could be implemented and built out. Hence it is a 'fallback' that is a material consideration in my determination.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

¹ LPA ref: 21/00175/HP granted 9 April 2021

Reasons

7. The appeal site comprises a detached hipped-roof dwelling with an attached single storey garage to the side that extends up to the shared boundary with the adjacent dwelling 'Rowan House'. The appeal dwelling is located in a row of detached properties along Salters Lane, where there is a mixture of two-storey dwellings and bungalows of different designs, styles, sizes and widths. All properties are set a good distance back from the road broadly on the same building line, and all are visible from the road.
8. Plot sizes are broadly similar, although the appeal plot is narrower than the ones either side. In addition, the properties either side are in close proximity to the shared boundaries with the appeal dwelling which reduces the space between these few dwellings compared to the relationship between some of the other wider plots.
9. The proposed development would involve the removal of the side garage and replacement with a two-storey hipped roof extension, built up to the shared boundary with Rowan House. The front elevation of the extension would be set back about 600mm from the front elevation of the host dwelling and the roof of the extension would be the same height as the roof of the host dwelling. It would still be hipped to match the existing roof pitch.
10. The South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (the 'SPD') advises that extensions should be subordinate to the host dwelling and, where visible from public vantage points, there should be 'design breaks' between the existing and proposed built forms. Design breaks can include setting the front of the extension back from the front of the dwelling and making the roof of the extension lower than the roof of the host dwelling. Such design breaks are fairly common mechanisms to ensure extensions remain visually subservient to the host dwelling. The SPD is general guidance and does not stipulate minimum distances for front set-backs and roof step-downs, as the context and setting of each property and development proposal would vary.
11. In approving the previous extension, the Council has already agreed that the gap between the side of the host dwelling and the shared boundary with Rowan House can be filled with a two-storey hipped roof extension, although it would not be at least 1m off the shared boundary at first floor level, as encouraged by the SPD.
12. The Council contends that a 0.5m set-back is very modest and not a meaningful design break. However the appellant confirms that the front set-back of 0.6m is the same as in the approved scheme. I find, when comparing the approved and proposed plans, that this seems to be the case.
13. Making the roof of the extension the same height as the host dwelling does not, in my view, create enough of a design break to ensure a visually subservient extension, especially when coupled with the modest set-back and being built up to the shared boundary. Even a 100mm drop-down of the roof would not be visually significant. Without the roof step-down, the proposed extension would not create a sufficient visual gap and break with the adjacent property. This would create a terracing effect that would not retain the character, appearance and integrity of the detached dwellings in this part of Salters Lane. Hence the character and appearance of the area would be adversely harmed. Due to the variety of houses designs, styles, plot and

property widths, the resulting dwelling would not, however, be unduly prominent in the streetscene.

14. Nonetheless, the appeal proposal would be contrary to Policy SWDP 21 Part viii of the South Worcestershire Development Plan which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that the scale, height and massing of development is appropriate to its setting. It would also be contrary to the design guidance in the SPD as already mentioned.
15. The appellant's agent refers to a side extension that has been approved and built elsewhere in the District with no set-back or drop in roof height. I have not been provided with any drawings or details of this or the site's context, so I am unable to make any meaningful comparisons. In any event I must consider the appeal proposal on its own merits.
16. The appellant considers setting the roof down lower is poor design and would lead to a larger area of flat roof that would not be as structurally strong or water tight. That may be so, but it has been designed by a professional architecture company who clearly consider it is a workable scheme.

Conclusion

17. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal should be dismissed.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR