



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2021

by Nigel Harrison BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/D/21/3278741

8 Ranmoor Gardens, Sheffield, S10 3FR

- 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 Shaun Walton against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref: 21/01996/FUL, dated April 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is: Garage extension to frontage, internal alterations, and conversion of existing garage to dining room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The date of the application given on the application form is April 2021 although this is stated to be 4 May 2021 on the appeal form. I have referred to this date in the banner heading above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - i) Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Ranmoor Conservation Area.
 - ii) The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with regard to privacy.
 - iii) The effect of the proposed development on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance of Conservation Area

4. The site is located within the Ranmoor Conservation Area (CA). At the statutory level the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
5. The houses within the Ranmoor Crescent development have a fairly uniform appearance and are set around an attractively landscaped central space which all the properties overlook. At the time of construction normal permitted development rights were removed to protect the character and appearance of the CA.

6. The significance of the CA derives from its prevailing character as a pre-eminent Victorian suburb comprising substantial detached dwellings of individual design set in spacious grounds in a leafy, sylvan setting. Although there is some modern infill development it tends to be sympathetic to the overall character of the area.
7. I note that an important consideration in the design and planning of the Ranmoor Gardens housing scheme was the retention of the central landscaped area and how the dwellings respond to this. Many retained trees in this area were part of the original landscape scheme of Tapton Grange, a grand house whose grounds formerly included the area now occupied by Ranmoor Gardens.
8. The proposed garage extension would project well forward of the existing front elevation, almost to the highway edge. This large forward projection is excessive, would disrupt the established building line along this side of Ranmoor Gardens, and would unbalance the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached houses. It would fail to respond positively to the context of the area and would be highly prominent in this location. As such, it would detrimentally affect the appearance of the host dwelling, the Ranmoor Gardens development, and the character and appearance of the CA. The proposal also involves the loss of the small garden area in front of the property, and this too would be harmful to the appearance of the dwelling and the development. Overall, I consider the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA and would be harmful to its significance.
9. Paragraphs 199-200 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) say when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to that significance. Any harm to or loss of the significance of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. In this case I find the harm to the CA to be less than substantial, but it nevertheless attracts considerable importance and weight. In these circumstances Framework paragraph 202 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.
10. Whilst it would no doubt be beneficial to the appellant to secure more practical garage parking, this is a private benefit, and I can identify no public benefits to outweigh the harm that would be caused. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Ranmoor Conservation Area. It conflicts with Policies H14, BE5, BE16 & and BE17 of the *Sheffield Unitary Development Plan* (UDP), adopted 1998, which amongst other things seek to secure new buildings of a high standard of design and require any new development within a CA to preserve or enhance its character or appearance.

Living Conditions

11. The proposed balcony, accessible from the first floor living accommodation, is of ample size to encourage sitting out and other activities. Consequently, the potential for overlooking and loss of privacy (particularly to the immediately adjacent properties (No 6 and No 10) is far greater than that possible from the smaller balconies found elsewhere on the development from where the potential for privacy loss is much more restricted.

12. The appellant suggests that the balcony could be reduced in depth if thought necessary. However, such a revision would markedly alter the nature of the proposal. The appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme and it is important that what is before me is essentially what was considered by the Local Planning Authority, and on which interested people's views were sought.
13. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would result in an unacceptable degree of overlooking that would materially harm the living conditions of the occupiers of adjacent dwellings regarding loss of privacy. It would conflict with UDP Policy H14 (c) which, amongst other considerations, requires development not to deprive residents of privacy.

Highway Safety

14. The proposed extension would bring the front of the garage almost to the edge of the road and this is likely to lead to access and visibility issues and a potential impact on highway safety. UDP Policy H14 (d) requires a safe access to the highway network and appropriate off-street parking, and Guideline 8 of the Council's *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Designing House Extensions* (SPG) says a garage should have a full parking space length of 5m between the garage doors and the boundary. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would be harmful to highway safety and would conflict with UDP Policy H14 and guidance in the SPG.

Other Matters

15. The appellant says the existing garage is not fit for purpose as an average vehicle will not fit through the opening; adding that his vehicle is not insured if parked on the driveway and must be garaged. However, I have no other information to explain why the vehicle must be garaged and cannot otherwise be insured, particularly as there are many instances where cars are parked on a driveway or the highway, even where a garage is available. Consequently, this argument lends little weight in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

16. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nigel Harrison

INSPECTOR