



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 27 July 2021 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K2420/D/21/3274457

2 The Green, Mill Lane, Sheepy Parva CV9 3RL

- 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 Filip Florczak against the decision of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00222/HOU, dated 29 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is re-modelling of the existing semi-detached property incorporating a double-storey extension at the front, single extension to the rear and associated landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. On 20 July 2021 the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The main parties have been provided with a further opportunity to make submissions in respect of the publication. Any comments received have been addressed in this decision.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. Along The Green are two sets of two-storey semi-detached Victorian dwellings that vary in appearance, albeit red brick is the predominantly used facing material. There are differences in brick bond and detailing across the properties, which have been altered and extended in various ways. Nonetheless, the red brick elevations are a key feature of this small group which creates a visual link between them and contributes positively to their character and appearance and that of the immediate area.
6. The evidence before me is that historically these properties faced west, however the elevations were reversed many years ago such that the original rear facades are today's main elevations facing The Green. Therefore, the

western elevations have characteristics of rear facades, and the outbuildings and parking areas for the properties generally front The Green.

7. While in many street scenes two storey front extensions may be visually prominent the properties in this group are set back behind properties along Mill Lane. Most also have significant extensions and outbuildings facing The Green. The main elevation of the appeal site is therefore seen in a somewhat different context to a typical frontage residential development.
8. The proposed two-storey extension would add significant bulk to the main elevation of the host dwelling; however, the articulation of the front elevation and the dual gables would break up its massing. It would be similar in height and form to an existing extension on the attached dwelling, albeit wider. However, the section projecting past the side of the original dwelling would be set back from both the front and rear elevations and highly glazed. As such, this additional width would not be a prominent feature in views from the public right of way behind the appeal site or from The Green. In terms of proportions and scale it would also give the semi-detached pair a more balanced appearance than at present and would help reinforce the reorientation of the dwelling towards The Green.
9. The large vertical openings of the proposed two-storey extension would contrast with the very different form of windows on the adjoining property, a distinction which would be evident from The Green. However, the design and appearance of windows varies considerably across the area, with several other contemporary examples nearby, and there is little consistency of window form even among the dwellings along The Green. As a result, the use of larger areas of modern glazing would not appear out of character within the wider area.
10. The contemporary glazing design would also relate well to the shape of the gables, and as such would sit comfortably with this relatively traditional form. While there would be large blank areas at first floor on the elevation facing The Green, this is not unusual for this row of properties given their historic orientation. The proposal would also result in a noticeable increase in glazing compared to the existing situation. Therefore, I consider that the window form would complement the traditional appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene.
11. There is render on the existing properties and historically on the host dwelling, but this appears to be only at ground floor level as a minor element of the relevant elevations, and on outbuildings. Red brick remains the dominant material and gives the street scene of The Green a consistent appearance and character clearly different to the modern properties around it, despite the differences in the design of the individual dwellings. In this context, the proposed use of off-white architectural cast concrete would introduce a very different and alien material into this row of properties. In particular, the proposed two-storey extension would cover the whole of the existing elevation fronting The Green. It would almost entirely obscure views of the red brick in views from that road, as only small glimpses of the existing wall could be achieved through some of the proposed windows.
12. The proposed concrete would have a somewhat harsh and urban appearance and would contrast sharply with the brick in colour and texture, creating a plain surface with little detailing, contrasting harmfully with the various brick bonds and colour variation which lend visual interest and a degree of softness to the

existing dwellings. Therefore, the use of this material to the extent proposed would relate poorly to the traditional red brick Victorian development which the dwelling is viewed as part of and would fail to anchor the extension to the host dwelling or its surroundings.

13. While I appreciate the desire to reinterpret the architecture of the host property, the use of this harsh, utilitarian and unsympathetic material to the extent proposed would substantially and harmfully alter the appearance of the host dwelling and would not achieve the subtle reinterpretation of context to which the appellant's Design and Access Statement refers. It would make the extension a dominant and prominent feature when seen from The Green and fundamentally alter its relationship with the neighbouring properties, to the detriment of the appearance of the host dwelling, the group and street scene.
14. Existing outbuildings would screen much of the proposed two-storey extension from view from Mill Lane. While small parts of the concrete would be glimpsed from that road, they would be seen in conjunction with areas of similarly coloured render on other nearby buildings. Consequently, the proposed material would have a limited visual impact from Mill Lane and the wider area. Nevertheless, this element of the proposal would be highly visible from The Green, and although it is a private road it would be seen by residents and visitors. Therefore, due to its use of materials this proposed extension would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the immediate area and would not respond to or work with the character of the location.
15. Render and reconstituted stone are found elsewhere locally, however those properties are considerably more recent and of different form to those on The Green and are therefore of significantly different appearance. Furthermore, those materials are used in combination with others and broken up by windows, porches and other architectural features, and as such do not dominate the host properties to the same extent as would occur with the appeal proposal. As such, the presence of other similar materials nearby does not justify the harm identified above from the use of architectural concrete for the two-storey element of the proposal.
16. The proposed single storey extension would also use architectural concrete, but would only cover part of the rear elevation, with the brick remaining visible at first-floor level. Given its relatively small scale it would appear subordinate to the host dwelling and would be largely screened from view from the public right of way by existing boundary treatments. Consequently, it would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area.
17. The garage would be extended and altered using red brick and would remain subordinate in both scale and appearance to the host dwelling. The use of facade perforation would add detail and visual interest to the elevation and overall would improve the appearance of this outbuilding. Due to its small scale however, this enhancement would not reduce the harm from the proposed two-storey extension.
18. I recognise that the appellant has sought advice in developing the proposal, as encouraged by the Framework. However, the appellant's evidence shows that the design options submitted to the Council in previous schemes and for pre-application advice were different to the design before me. The Design Midland Design Panel comments pre-date the submitted plans, so I cannot be certain that they assessed the appeal scheme. In any event, the use of

architectural concrete would be at odds with the Design Panel's advice to explore a restraint material palette which references the existing unassuming and humble materials, and which reflects the colour and considers the texture of the brickwork. As such, this aspect of the proposal does not accord with the Design Panel's comments.

19. Both the development plan and the Framework support outstanding or innovative design, but within the context that such development should be sympathetic to local character and fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings. Policy DM10 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016) (DPD) allows for some limited conflict with its design criteria in exceptional circumstances where outstanding, innovative design is demonstrated, and Policy S8 of the Sheepy Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2036 (made 2019) (NP) does not exclude innovative design where appropriate. However, whilst the proposal would be an unusually contemporary approach for this area and a bespoke design, there is no compelling evidence before me that it would be an innovative or outstanding example of contemporary design or construction. I therefore find that, for the reasons above, it would not achieve the high-quality design required by local and national policies.
20. Accordingly, the proposed two-storey extension would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. Consequently, it would conflict with DPD Policy DM10 and NP Policy S8 which permit development where it complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area, including with regard to materials, and where it makes a positive contribution to the street scene. The Framework directs that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Other Matters

21. The proposal would be an opportunity to repair and improve the dwelling and would 'future proof' the accommodation for the appellant's family and future residents. It would improve natural surveillance of The Green and remove existing unsympathetic additions. The redesign of the front garden and driveway would complement the reorientation of the dwelling and would follow the pattern of development along The Green, and these works and the alterations to the garage would improve the appearance of the site. However, given my findings above regarding the scale and siting of the proposed extension, there is no compelling evidence before me that this would be the only scheme where these benefits could be achieved. Consequently, they carry limited weight, and do not outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

22. There are no material considerations that indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

23. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

L McKay

INSPECTOR