
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2021

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/21/3281268

48 Brookside Crescent, Cuffley, Potters Bar EN6 4QN

- 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 Gareth Tongue against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2021/1692/HOUSE, dated 26 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as a one and a half storey side extension and internal alterations.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect the development would have on the character and appearance of the area and on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Brookside Close is characterised by two storey detached houses many of which have small flat roof dormers projecting from roof slopes extending down to low eaves heights. No 48 also has these features reflected in its prominent side elevation with the front presenting gables to the street. In this context the combination of the proposed extensive hipped roof running at right angles to the existing ridge, with pitched roof half dormers and, an eaves level higher than that of the existing 'cat slide' roof, would make the extension appear harmfully at odds with the design, proportions and appearance of the existing building and its surroundings. The scale and bulk of the extension would appear excessive in this context.
4. The configuration and proportions of the front of the extension would accentuate its horizontality in harmful contrast with the more vertical emphasis of the existing front elevation. This harmful effect would be particularly conspicuous given the corner location of the site.
5. The lower ridge and floor level heights, along with the slight set back to front and rear would give some aspects of the extension a subordinate relationship to the host building. However, the existing front elevation is broken into two

distinct components with a projecting bay. The front elevation of the extension would appear longer than that element which exists between the bay and flank wall. This aspect, along with the extent of projecting ridge and eaves higher than those of the 'cat slide' roof, would prevent the proposal overall as appearing as a subordinate extension relative to the house's current configuration.

6. The development would be contrary to Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005 (District Plan) Policies D1 and D2. Together these require high quality design that respects and relates to the character and context of the area, as well as following Supplementary Design Guidance, 2005 (SDG). The development would be contrary to the SDG which, amongst other criteria, expects extensions to complement and reflect the design and character of the dwelling and be subordinate in scale. It would also not represent the visually attractive development which is sympathetic to local character required by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
7. The relative size and ratios of existing and proposed footprints are less pertinent in assessing its effects in this case than the resulting external appearance of the property seen within its built context. In any event neither the District Plan nor SDG require a quantitative assessment.
8. No 46 next door has a hipped roof arrangement to one side. However, that element is more limited to that proposed and the configuration appears as a more integral element of that building. One property opposite has wide pitched roof dormers but would appear to be the only one in the street. These nearby properties do not, therefore, create a setting in which the appeal proposal would appear less harmful or conspicuous.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of other properties in Cuffley with extensions of a similar appearance to that proposed and which they advise have the benefit of planning permission. Having viewed these, I can appreciate why the appellant may have considered the design approaches in those cases were ones to follow, given the apparent similarity between those house types and No 48, and with some on prominent corner sites.
10. Nevertheless, I do not have the full details of these developments nor the circumstances that led to them being considered acceptable. In any event, those that I saw served to confirm that similarly designed extensions have the potential to significantly change the original appearance of the host dwelling in contrast to their streetscape setting. I have determined the appeal on its own merits in the context of its surroundings and these other examples do not lead me to consider that the proposal's effect on character and appearance would be acceptable. Indeed, I note that the SDG emphasises the importance of taking account of the street context of development as opposed to the character of the settlement overall.

Neighbours' living conditions

11. The outlook from properties opposite include the appeal dwelling and its side garden as part of the wider street scene including other properties and spaces within the Crescent. Although the proposed extension would be sizeable and noticeable, these aspects would not be so extensive or close to properties opposite that the outlook from their front windows or gardens would be materially harmed. Whilst there would be visual harm, as set out above, this

would be experienced as part of the character and appearance of the area. This adverse effect on appearance would be seen and appreciable from properties opposite, but this in itself would not harm the living conditions of occupiers.

12. The development would not be unduly dominant when experienced from neighbouring houses and would accord with the SDG in that particular respect. Consequently, it would avoid conflict with District Plan Policy D1 in this regard. It would similarly accord with the Framework's requirement that development should create places with a high standard of amenity for existing users. However, avoidance of harm in this respect, and avoidance of conflict with local and national policy and guidance in these terms, does not weigh in favour of the appeal.

Conclusion

13. The development would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Council guidance, the Framework and the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR