
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2021 by A J Sutton BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

by Zoe Raygen DipURP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4625/D/21/3281467

18 Markham Crescent, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 0PF

- 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 Nigel Nokes against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2021/00229/MINFHO, dated 25 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 11 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey side and rear extension.
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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 had the opportunity to make submissions on this matter and no substantive comments were made. I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material factor in determining this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for Recommendations

5. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling, at the head of a cul-de-sac of similar, well-spaced, paired dwellings interspersed with a few short terraces of properties. It is part of a residential estate that is close to the Jaguar Landrover premises. However, I saw that the estate is well screened from the large plant by roads, verges and mature vegetation.
6. The appeal property and its paired dwelling, No 19, have been altered, but the symmetry of the dwellings has been retained at first floor level. This is generally the case for other semi-detached properties in the cul-de-sac.

Therefore, despite irregularities in the layout of development, the consistency in the form of these dwellings and the spaces between them, which allow views of the sky and trees in the estate, are positive features in the street scene and contribute to the character of the area.

7. The Framework states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It requires that developments, amongst other matters, should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.
8. The proposed two storey side extension would be set at the shared boundary with No 17, with only a small gap towards the front of the dwellings. This would not cause a terracing effect with No 17 due to the retained space at the first floor of that property. However, the development would fill the significant space at the side of the appeal property. The substantial closing of the existing gap at this aspect would harmfully erode the prevailing sense of space. In doing so it would diminish this distinct and positive feature of the cul-de-sac.
9. The proposal would be lower than the main roof and stepped in from the original front elevation. However, inconsistent with the advice set out in the House Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the first-floor element would not be set back from the front of the main house. Consequently, it would not be sufficiently subservient and would visually compete with the original dwelling. This would detrimentally unbalance the form and mass of the paired properties. Furthermore, the proposed large front window at the first floor would amplify this imbalance. In these respects, the proposal would significantly disrupt the existing symmetry between the appeal property and No 19. This would harm the appearance of the dwelling and would not be sympathetic to the original architectural style of the properties.
10. A few properties, in the cul-de-sac, have been extended in a similar manner to that proposed in this case. However, these properties either do not have primary street frontage or they are part of a short terrace. They are therefore less prominent in the street scene and do not harmfully disrupt the symmetry of a paired dwelling. For these reasons they are not comparable to this harmful development and do not weigh in its favour.
11. The loss of space and symmetry identified above would only be apparent from localised views in the cul-de-sac. However, the harmful development would not respect the general form of dwellings and character of the area and would make the street less visually attractive for residents and visitors. The use of matching materials and incorporation of some sympathetic features into the design, would not mitigate this harm.
12. I therefore conclude the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. In this regard, it would conflict with policy P15 of Solihull Local Plan (Local Plan) which requires that all development proposals will be expected to achieve good quality, inclusive and sustainable design.
13. It would be inconsistent with guidance of the SPD which seeks, amongst other matters, to retain symmetry and minimise the impact on space between dwellings. It would also be contrary to policies of the Framework requiring well-designed places.

Other Matters

14. The effective use of land and energy efficiency gains would be limited benefit given the scale of the development. These benefits would not therefore outweigh the harmful effect of the poorly designed proposal and the conflict with the Local Plan outlined above. Moreover, I am not persuaded that this is the only solution open to the appellant to increase family accommodation at this property and, for this reason, this matter would not justify this harmful development.
15. No adverse effects on the living conditions of neighbours, which is consistent with policy P14 of the Local Plan, should be an expectation for all development. This should also be the case with regards satisfactory parking. Therefore, these matters are neutral factors in this appeal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. There are no material considerations, including the Framework and the benefits of the proposal, that indicate the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A J Sutton

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and agree with the recommendation. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR