



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2021

by Robin Buchanan BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/D/21/3280761

20 Lauderdale Road, Hunton Bridge WD4 8QB

- 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 Mrs Leila Inman against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0836/FUL, dated 31 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension above existing garage/utility.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor side extension above existing garage/utility at 20 Lauderdale Road, Hunton Bridge WD4 8QB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/0836/FUL, dated 31 March 2021, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to the streetscene.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached house in a residential road. It has a two-storey front gable and, on one side, a wide and deep (cat-slide) front roof which slopes down from the main ridge to single storey eaves level. On the other side is a single storey flat roofed garage and utility room. The road contains two rows of two-storey detached and semi-detached houses, and some bungalows, of various size, design and age. Some are spaced closer to each other, including due to side extensions, while others are more separated. This pattern in the siting and scale and massing of built form, and as this influences openness between properties, is locally distinctive.
4. The proposal would result in a first floor side elevation built along the common property boundary with the adjoining detached house at No 24 Lauderdale Road. This would infringe the Council's design criterion 4c for first floor extensions¹. It ordinarily requires a minimum inset of 1.2m from a boundary having regard to, inter alia, potential visual impact, the form of a property and the general streetscene.

¹ Three Rivers District Council Development Management Policies, July 2013 – Appendix 2

5. However, the asymmetric design of the extension (front to rear) would mean that the tallest part, at the same ridge height as the main roof, would be limited to a small triangular side gable at roof level. This part would be centrally positioned in the side elevation, set well-back from the front elevation of the appeal property. While it would be apparent in public views from Lauderdale Road, particularly in one direction, it would nonetheless not therefore be unduly prominent or conspicuous.
6. The full height first floor part of the proposal would have appreciable vertical scale and massing to eaves level. This would be sited at the rear of the appeal property and the hipped side roof slope would recede away from the boundary, partly behind the back slope of the gable roof. The first floor part at the front would have a cat-slide roof and a similar low eaves level as the existing main roof. The dormer window would be diminutive in size and subordinate in nature.
7. The two-storey facing side elevation of No 24 is about 8m from the boundary with the appeal property and it is, therefore, separated by a significant distance. Moreover, the existing gap between the upper floor of these two houses extends further and is appreciably wider than most in the road. While a double garage side extension at No 24 is much closer to the boundary, it is a single storey building with a low pitched hipped roof that recedes away from the appeal property.
8. Taking all of the above into account, the proposal would result in first floor built form on the boundary and reduce the gap between the appeal property and No 24 at first floor level. However, despite its depth, the relatively narrow width of the extension would maintain a substantial separation distance to the two-storey part of No 24. Notwithstanding its siting and scale and massing, it would not, therefore, be over-sized or be close enough to appear unduly cramped or cause any unacceptable terracing effect in the streetscene. Public views from Lauderdale Road towards an appreciable space between these two houses would be maintained, including towards the sky or landscaped rear gardens beyond. As a result, the proposal would not cause harm to the character or appearance of the area, having particular regard to the streetscene.
9. The extension would be well-designed and reflect the intrinsic form of the appeal property. It would also integrate the somewhat incongruous, utilitarian single storey extension and tall parapet wall. This would give a more coherent balance to the form of the appeal property overall. It would, as a result, make a positive visual and spatial contribution to the character and appearance of the area and the streetscene.
10. Consequently, it would comply with the Council's Core Strategy² Policies CP1 and CP2 and Development Management Policy DM1. These policies include that development will need to be high quality in design, having regard to height, plot frontage width and gaps between buildings, and respect local context and distinctiveness of an area to conserve and enhance the built environment. Aside from numerical conflict with the 1.2m boundary dimension, the proposal would otherwise accord with the Council's design criteria.

² Three Rivers District Council Core Strategy, October 2011

11. It would also be consistent with objectives of the Framework to ensure well-designed places. It would add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment, and maintain a strong sense of place.

Other Matters

12. An owner of No 24 might seek to further develop this property, including extending above the single storey side extension. However, there is no evidence of any specific proposal so it remains to be seen whether there would cumulatively be an unacceptable terracing effect. These are therefore generalised concerns. The Council (or another Inspector at appeal) would be able to consider any future planning application at that time. I have, in any event, determined the appeal on its individual planning merits and in the present circumstances of the site and its immediate context.

Conditions

13. The Council has suggested some conditions. I have considered these, and where necessary I have modified the wording in the interests of clarity, in light of the tests in Framework paragraph 56 and in Planning Practice Guidance³. In addition to the standard time limit condition, conditions are necessary to specify the approved plans, to ensure certainty, and so that the development is carried out with external materials that match the appearance of the appeal property. Both of these conditions are in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that, subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable and therefore the appeal should succeed.

Robin Buchanan

INSPECTOR

³ Paragraph ID: 21a-003-20190723.

Schedule of Conditions (3)

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Scale 1:1250@A4 OS site location plan
 - LR01 version A Existing site plan
 - LR03 version A Existing ground floor plan
 - LR04 version A Existing first floor plan
 - LR05 version A Existing roof plan
 - LR06 version A Existing front elevation
 - LR07 version A Existing rear elevation
 - LR08 version A Existing east elevation
 - LR09 version A Existing west elevation
 - LR02 version A Proposed site plan
 - LR10 version E Proposed ground floor plan
 - LR11 version E Proposed first floor plan
 - LR12 version E Proposed roof plan
 - LR13 version B Proposed front elevation
 - LR14 version B Proposed rear elevation
 - LR15 version B Proposed east elevation
 - LR16 version B Proposed west elevation
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.