
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2021

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1775/D/21/3278875

34 Whitwell Road, Southsea PO4 0QR

- 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 and Mrs Rick and Clare Cowhig against the decision of Portsmouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00474/HOU, dated 29 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is for a single storey ground floor rear infill extension.
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Application for Costs

1. An application for costs was made by the appellants against the Council and is the subject of a separate decision.

Decision

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey ground floor rear infill extension at 34 Whitwell Road, Southsea PO4 0QR, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 21/00474/HOU, dated 29 March 2021, subject to the conditions set out below:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise in complete accordance with approved plans: 516.P100_A, 516.E101_A, 516.E102_A, 516.E103_A, 516.P101_A, 516.P102_A, 516.P103_A and 516.P104_A.
 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.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are i) the effect of the appeal proposal upon the character and appearance of the recipient building and the wider terrace of which it forms part, and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Craneswater and Eastern Parade Conservation Area; and ii) The effect of the proposal upon the living conditions of the occupants of 32 Whitwell Road, with specific reference to light and outlook.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a mid-terraced house located within a residential area generally comprising well conserved townhouses within the Conservation Area.
5. The subject dwelling has a centralised two storey rear gable projection and an infill extension has been constructed in the past on its eastern side, adjacent to 36 Whitwell Road; which itself has been extended to the shared boundary. On the western side exists a light-well, subdivided by a high brick wall and undeveloped on the opposite side at 32 Whitwell Road.
6. The rear of the appeal site is fairly close to Bembridge Crescent, although any public views of the extension would be very limited bearing in mind the presence of intervening vegetation and other structures.
7. I acknowledge that the proposal would give rise to a large proportion of glazing across the rear elevation at ground floor level, nonetheless, views of this would be limited to within the private garden scene. I accept that the use of grey aluminium doors would provide a strong contrast to the fenestration on the existing building, but nonetheless, contemporary designs such as that proposed can act as a foil to the more traditional architecture of the original building. I say this notwithstanding the advice set out within the Council's Conservation Area Guidelines.
8. Overall I consider that the proposed extension would be subordinate in form to the host dwelling and in totality would not overly dominate the terrace of which it forms part. I note reference to the appeal decision at 13 Marion Avenue, but I have been provided with little detail on this and ultimately each case must be assessed on its own merits.
9. In conclusion on this matter, I consider that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and it complies with Policy PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan (2012) which, amongst other things, requires development to and respect the character of the City through excellent architectural quality in changes to existing buildings that relates well to the City's Conservation Areas.

Living Conditions

10. The proposed extension would restrict sunlight to the ground floor rear windows of no32, but by virtue of its orientation this would not be significant bearing in mind the presence of the two storey projection that currently exists. The outlook from the neighbouring ground floor rear windows would be curtailed to a degree, but taking into account the presence of the aforementioned intervening brick wall and that the extension would be to its side, I consider, on balance, that the proposal would not give rise to a materially harmful sense of enclosure.
11. Therefore in conclusion I consider that the proposal would not give rise to a material loss of light to, or outlook from, 32 Whitwell Road and the proposal again complies with Policy PCS23 in that it would protect amenity and provide a good standard of living environment for neighbouring occupiers.

Conclusion and Conditions

12. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.
13. Other than the standard time limit condition, the Council recommends that conditions are imposed that require the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and that materials used in the construction of the extension match those of the existing building. I consider that in the interests of the character and appearance of the area that these conditions are necessary.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR