
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 23 November 2021

by Luke Simpson BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/21/3279267

25 Georgewood Road, Hemel Hempstead HP3 8AL

- 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 & Mrs Martin Adams (Kingswood Design Ltd) against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01885/FHA, dated 7 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Two Storey Rear Extension and Raising of Front Roof and first floor front and side extension.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 20 July 2021 the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Accordingly, both main parties were invited to provide representations in relation to the revised Framework. I have therefore had regard to the revised Framework in considering this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area.
 - The effect of the proposed development upon the living conditions of the occupiers of 23 Georgewood Road (No 23), with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The host property, when viewed from the street scene, has the appearance of a single storey detached property of a relatively traditional design. When viewed from the rear, the host property has a two-storey appearance, which is partly facilitated by the sloping land.
5. The design of residential development on Georgewood Road varies and includes both two storey and single storey dwellings with some variation in architectural style. However, whilst there is variation in scale and design generally, on the northern side of Georgewood Road, within the immediate vicinity of the host

property, neighbouring dwellings typically have a single storey appearance, when viewed from the street scene. Whilst some of these properties have been extended, during my site visit I noted that they are predominantly consistent in terms of scale, particularly when viewed from the front.

6. The proposed development would completely transform the appearance of the host property when viewed within the street scene. The roof would be raised, and a first-floor side and front extension would be incorporated over the existing single storey wing. The combination of these design features would result in a dominant two-storey appearance which would interrupt the single storey pattern of development on this part of Georgewood Road.
7. In addition, given the proposed first-floor extension above the existing single storey wing, the proposed development would reduce the visual separation between the host property and 27 Georgewood Road. Whilst properties on this part of Georgewood Road are relatively close-knit, there is predominantly a clear visual separation between the roofs of these properties. This visual separation would be significantly diminished by the proposed development which would result in a harmful cramped appearance.
8. The appellant has referred to various planning permissions granted by the Council for extensions to properties on Georgewood Road. However, the precise site-specific circumstances of these cases are not before me. Every case should be considered on its own merits. In this case, on the basis of the evidence before me, including my observations of the surrounding area during the site visit, the appeal proposals would not be in-keeping with the scale of development on this part of Georgewood Road.
9. Similarly, the fact that the neighbouring property at No.23 includes a recently constructed extension up to the boundary with the host property, does not justify the harm that the proposed first-floor side and front extension would cause and the resultant cramped appearance this would create. Indeed, the neighbouring extension, approved under Council reference 4/01894/19/FHA, is single storey. The first-floor side and front extension proposed by the appellants is far more prominent. As such, this consideration does not outweigh my findings.
10. In summary, the proposed development would be incongruous and would result in a cramped appearance within the street scene. As such, it would not be in-keeping with the character and appearance of development on this part of Georgewood Road. The proposed development would therefore conflict with Core Strategy (2013)¹ Policy CS12, which states in part that development should integrate with the streetscape character and respect the scale of surrounding development.
11. There would also be a conflict with Framework Paragraph 130(c), which requires that development is sympathetic to local character.

Living Conditions

12. The proposed development would incorporate a raised patio to the rear of the host property. Given the sloping topography of the land, this patio would allow views into the primary rear garden space of No 23, over the existing fence which separates these properties. Whilst I noted, during my site visit, that

¹ Core Strategy 2006-2031 Adopted 25 September 2013

there is existing planting on the boundary between these properties, this is not particularly dense or extensive. As such, this boundary planting would not sufficiently screen views into the neighbouring garden of No 23.

13. A planning condition to secure a privacy screen would not be acceptable in this instance. Indeed, given the height of the raised patio, a privacy screen in this location would result in an unacceptable overbearing impact upon occupiers of this neighbouring property.
14. The proposed development would therefore result in an unacceptable loss of privacy to the occupiers of No 23. As such, it would conflict with Core Strategy (2013) Policy CS12, which states in part that development should avoid a loss of privacy to surrounding properties.
15. There would also be a conflict with Framework Paragraph 130(f), which requires that development does not undermine quality of life.

Other Matters

16. The appellant has referred to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out within the NPPF and referred to in Core Strategy (2013) Policy NP1. However, in considering both of the main issues I have found that the proposed development conflicts with the Framework and in particular, Framework Paragraph 130. As such this consideration does not alter my conclusions.
17. The appellants have referred to the previous permission granted by the Council under application reference 20/02138/FHA. I consider that there is a realistic prospect that this development could be implemented and as such it represents a fallback position, which is a material consideration in the determination of this appeal.
18. However, the proposed development is materially different to the fallback position. It incorporates an extension to the front and side at first floor level, which would significantly increase the overall scale of the development and lead to a cramped appearance. As such, this matter does not outweigh my findings.
19. The appellants state that there were no objections from neighbouring residents. However, the absence of such representations does not justify the harm which the development would cause.

Conclusion

20. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no other matters which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. As such, the appeal is dismissed.

Luke Simpson

INSPECTOR