



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2021

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X2410/D/21/3277302

1 Hanover Drive, Sileby LE12 7PL

- 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 Lee Irons against the decision of Charnwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/21/0326/2, dated 15 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as:
"Single Storey extension to rear and ground floor alterations to create open plan lounge, dining and family areas.
Loft conversion to create first floor accommodation."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") on 20 July 2021, replacing the version published in February 2019. The parts of the Framework most relevant to the Council's reason for refusal, and therefore this appeal, have not been significantly amended. As a result I consider that there is no requirement for me to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and I am satisfied that no party's interests have been prejudiced by my taking this approach. Where I have referred in my decision to specific paragraphs of the Framework, the numbering used is that of the July 2021 version.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached bungalow in a residential area of Sileby, situated at the entrance to Hanover Drive from Highgate Road. It has two bedrooms, and at present all of the accommodation is on the ground floor. It is part of a small group of similar properties running from No 77 Highgate Road to No 7 Hanover Drive (these appeared to me to have originally been built to the same hipped roof design, although some have subsequently been altered). The remaining dwellings on Hanover Drive are detached or semi-detached bungalows, mostly based on the same original gable roofed design

- with projecting front gable bays, while Highgate Road is mainly characterised by semi-detached houses.
5. The proposed development is the enlargement of the property by converting the loft to provide three additional bedrooms and a new family bathroom, with two front dormers and a large rear extension. The roof would be converted from hipped to gabled, and although the Council's officer report describes the rear first floor extension as a dormer, it would extend across the full width of the property, with separate pitched roofs (on different slopes) above and below. The ground floor would be enlarged to the rear with an extension projecting around 6m beyond the existing rear elevation.
 6. The Council's 2020 Design Supplementary Planning Document ("the SPD") provides guidance intended to ensure that domestic extensions relate to the form and appearance of existing buildings. Of particular relevance to this appeal is the advice that extensions should respect the basic shape, proportions and size of the existing property, and the SPD emphasises the particular importance of the shape, pitch and style of roof. In this case, the proposed alterations to the roof would do none of these things. The result would be a bulky and cumbersome extension, which would dominate and overwhelm the existing original property.
 7. Although the front of the property is set well back from the roadway (by around 21m, by the appellant's calculation), the increased bulk of the roof extensions would be clearly visible in views along Highgate Road from the south east. The reconfigured side elevation, and the mismatched front and rear roof pitches, would be clearly seen by anyone heading from St Gregory's Drive towards Highgate Road, in which views it would be a bulky and intrusive feature.
 8. The appeal property's semi-detached "twin" at No 3 Hanover Drive retains its hipped roof and, in views from the public realm, its original modest proportions. The proposed extensions would also therefore unbalance the appearance of the semi-detached pair as a whole.
 9. The appellant drew my attention to a similar (although not identical) extension next door at No 87 Highgate Road, which I was able to view at the time of my site visit. While I do not know the circumstances in which that scheme came into being, including the development plan policies and guidance which applied at the time, it seemed to me that it had many of the same negative effects on the streetscene and the character of the area as would the appeal proposal. The front dormers on No 87 also stood out as an exception to the prevailing character of the area, as front dormers did not otherwise appear to be a common feature. I saw another similar rear extension at No 81 Highgate Road, although that example did not have front dormers. However, I saw that the large side gable wall and mismatched front and rear roof pitches visible at that property emphasised the bulk of the rear extension. In my view those two other extensions are incongruous examples which harm, rather than define, the character of the area. Their presence therefore does not add significant weight in support of the proposal in this appeal.
 10. The appellant also suggested that the proposal would allow decaying render at the front of the appeal property to be replaced "with a more technologically advanced type". However, while there may be advantages to replacing the existing render there is nothing before me to suggest that this could only be

done by also erecting a large extension. Again, this argument does not therefore weigh in favour of the proposed development.

11. The extension would be of materials to match the existing property, and in this respect would therefore be acceptable. However, this would not outweigh the other harm which I have identified above.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal conflicts with Policy CS2 of the 2015 Charnwood Core Strategy, with Saved Policies EV/1 and H/17 of the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan, and with Policy G2 of the 2020 Sileby Neighbourhood Plan. Together, these policies seek to ensure that new development (including domestic extensions) is well-designed, and respects and enhances the character of the area, including in its scale and massing. For the same reasons, the proposed extension would not comply either with the requirements of Paragraph 134 of the Framework¹ or the 2019 National Design Guide.

Conclusion

13. The development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, and the proposal therefore conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector

¹ This was Paragraph 130 in the 2019 version of the Framework referred to in the Council's officer report and decision notice.