

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2022

by John Gunn DipTP, DipDBE, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/21/3280746

36 College Close, Flamstead, Herfordshire AL3 8DJ

- 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 Arthur Burrowes against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01463/FHA, dated 7 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'single storey front, side and rear extensions'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. College Close is located a short distance from the centre of the village. It is characterised by a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, with well-defined building lines, set behind modest sized landscaped front gardens. The dwellings enclose a communal green space, which provides an open spacious quality to the locality. The appeal property is located on a corner, close to the entrance to College Close.
4. The proposed front extension is of a similar design to other extensions within the close and would be constructed of materials to match the existing dwelling. I find that it would harmonise with the existing house and the area within which it is located.
5. The proposed rear and side extension would create a wrap-around structure that would enable the reconfiguration of the ground floor. The Council have raised no objection to the rear element of the proposal. From the evidence submitted, and what I saw on my site visit, I am satisfied that this element of the proposed development would not cause harm to the character of the area. That said, the side extension would be positioned well forward of the building line of Nos 38 - 40 College Close and would be visually dominant within the streetscene. Moreover, it would reduce the gap between the gable wall of the host property and the properties on the opposite side of College Close, i.e., Nos 1-4, thereby restricting the open view that currently exists from the entrance of College Close to the communal green space.

6. I acknowledge that the proposed side extension would not project beyond the curved section of the existing boundary wall. However, it would intrude into the area of open garden to the side of the host property for much of its length and be significantly higher than the existing boundary wall. I also note that the proposed development would incorporate a hipped roof, which is not a roof style that is currently present in the Close. As a result, the proposal would appear as an incongruous feature within the street scene.
7. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policies CS6 and CS12 of the CS, and Saved Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 – 2011 (LP). These require developments, amongst other matters, to be sympathetic to their surroundings in terms of local character, design, scale, landscaping and visual impact.

Other Considerations

8. I note the evidence provided by the appellant with regards to the land ownership. However, this does not materially affect my conclusions as set out above.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to developments that have been undertaken at Nos 10 and 17. The full circumstances of those decisions have not been made available to me. Furthermore, I note that the properties are in less prominent locations, within the Close, than the appeal property and consequently the impact on the character and appearance is not directly comparable with the appeal site. In any event, I am mindful that each decision must be determined on its own merits.
10. I also recognise that flower beds have been provided alongside the footway to College Close, and these have helped to deter anti-social activity. They also provide some visual relief to the appeal site. However, the benefit of these features is very limited, and in any event, they are temporary and could easily be removed. Consequently, I find that they would not mitigate the harmful effect of the development for the reasons set out above.
11. I acknowledge that the proposal would not adversely affect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, by reason of overlooking.

Conclusion

12. I have found that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the locality. Limited weight has been given cumulatively to the material considerations cited in support of the proposal, but I conclude that they do not outweigh the harm the proposed development would cause to the area. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal conflicts with Policies CS6 and CS12 of the CS and Saved Appendix 7 of the LP.
13. There are no material considerations that indicate the application should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan as a whole. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Gunn

INSPECTOR