



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: 1st February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F2415/D/21/3279141

150 Station Lane, Scraptoft, Leicester LE7 9UF

- 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 Bajwa against the decision of Harborough District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00751/FUL, dated 21 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is extensions to an existing detached dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading differs slightly from that used on the planning application and appeal forms. I have omitted the words "revised scheme", as it is not descriptive of the development.
3. 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 reasons 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.
4. Further evidence was submitted by the appellant relating to a proposed extension and alterations to a bungalow at 138 Station Lane which had been granted planning permission by the Council after the normal deadline for submitting evidence had passed (LPA Ref: 21/01364/FUL). This is relevant to the proposal before me, and the matter raised is addressed in my reasons below. The Council was also given the opportunity to comment on the matter, and although it did not do so I am satisfied that no party has been prejudiced by my accepting the additional evidence from the appellant.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

6. The appeal relates to a detached hipped-roof bungalow, essentially rectangular but with various projections, including a garage and a conservatory, to the

sides and rear. The dwelling's living accommodation is mainly on the ground floor, although there is also a bedroom in the attic space. The bungalow sits on a reasonably generous plot, and although the building fills most of the width of the site there are gardens of a good size to front and rear.

7. The appeal property is on the western side of Station Lane, where it forms part of a group of dwellings set on a broadly consistent building line between Scraftoft Lane to the north and Southfield Close to the south. The group is formed of bungalows of one sort or another, although there is variation of design, form and detail within the group to the extent that no two are exactly the same. For example, Nos 152 and 132 have small front dormers, while No 144 has a high front gable with a window at first floor level. Nevertheless, the predominant use of hipped roofs ensures that there is a degree of visual separation and spaciousness between adjoining dwellings, notwithstanding the fact that they tend to occupy most of the width of their plot and thus are physically close to one another. The dwellings also have a similar low eaves height which means that, in spite of the design variations within the group, there is for the most part a broad consistency of scale.
8. The proposal is to convert the existing roof space to provide three bedrooms, each with an ensuite bathroom. An extension to the rear of the ground floor would provide an expanded lounge and a new kitchen area, and a small infill extension at the front corner would square off the building's footprint. The existing complex roof would be simplified; the upper floor accommodation would have a half-hipped roof with a flat central area (sometimes described as a "crown roof"), while the rear extension would have a flat roof. The front and side upper-floor rooms would have rooflights, while the main bedroom at the back of the property would have three hipped dormers. There would be a triangular dormer on the front roof pitch above the landing and stairs.
9. Although the front eaves height would be unchanged, the creation of a relatively very substantial amount of living space would result in the property having high side elevations and, at the rear, effectively becoming one and a half storeys in height. While the maximum height of the building would be increased by only around 0.4m compared to the existing main ridge, the new roof would be at a greater height across much more of the dwelling, giving it a top-heavy appearance compared to its lower-profile neighbours. In my view it is this, rather than the height of the roof in itself, which would put the appeal property visually at odds with its neighbours.
10. The increased height of the roof would also be close to the side boundaries of the appeal property, which would narrow the visual gap between it and its neighbours. The additional bulk and massing would notably be seen in oblique views from Station Lane, from where the high side elevations would rise above the roofs of the neighbouring dwellings, emphasising the top-heavy and incongruous appearance of the appeal property. It appeared to me that, because of the differences in vegetation cover in front gardens this would be most apparent when travelling from the north.
11. At the back of the property, the combination of the very large flat-roofed extension and the one and a half storey principal rear elevation with its three dormers would result in No 150 visually dominating its smaller neighbours on either side. While this would not be a public view, it would be visible from various nearby gardens, and again would be at odds with the prevailing

character and appearance of the immediate surroundings. I note that the Council considered that the flat-roofed extension would be within permitted development parameters, and I have no reason to take a different view. However, the combination of the extensions which comprise the totality of the scheme before me would make for an overbearing and alien development.

12. The Council's officer report addressed the matter of the proposed flat-topped roof, and the appellant drew my attention to No 140 Station Lane, which already has a flat roof. I do not disagree with the appellant's argument that the flat roof at No 140 is "barely visible from the street scene", and has "the appearance of a traditional hipped roof". However, while crown roofs are not a common feature of the area, as I have described above in this case it is the bulk and overall massing of the extensions and roof, rather than the particular arrangement of the roof, which would cause harm. In any event, I also saw on my site visit that the roof at No 140 appears to be both lower and to extend across a smaller proportion of that property than would be the case for the proposal now before me.
13. I have not been provided with the full details of the recent grant of planning permission at No 138, only the approved drawings. There appear to be some similarities between the schemes, in that both properties would be extended at first-floor level and given a half-hipped roof. However, the drawings also suggest that the roof at No 138 would occupy a relatively smaller part of the width of the property, and the raised side elevations would not be as deep, as those in this appeal. As a consequence, based on the evidence before me I consider that the development at No 138 would be less bulky and less dominant than the proposal for No 150. It does not therefore carry significant weight in favour of the appeal scheme. Similarly, while I note that the appellant considers the scheme addresses the reasons for which an earlier proposal for extensions at the appeal site was refused permission¹, I have determined the appeal on its own merits and found harm as described above.
14. I conclude that the proposed development would, because of the bulk and massing of the proposed roof extension and alterations, be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy GD8 of the 2019 Harborough Local Plan and Policy S10 of the 2016 Scraftoft Neighbourhood Plan. Among other things these policies together require new development to respect local character and the context and characteristics of an individual site and its wider surroundings.

Conclusion

15. The proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the 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 LPA Ref: 20/00832/FUL, subsequently dismissed at appeal Ref: APP/F2415/D/20/3260295