



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2022

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/W/21/3281366

338 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 8AZ

- 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 Caruso against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/04014/FUL, dated 25 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is change of use of single dwelling to 3 no. flats, first and second floor side and rear extension and rear terraces, porch and roof lights to front elevation and erection of bike store to front.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development in the header above is taken from the Council's decision notice and appeal form. It is different to that set out on the application form but it has been agreed by the main parties. As such, my assessment is based on the above description.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on (i) the character and appearance of the host building and the area, and (ii) the living conditions of occupiers of 336 and 340 Cherry Hinton Road (No 336 and No 340) in terms of outlook and privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The site lies in a suburban location and in a line of buildings close to the junction of Cherry Hinton Road and Mowbray Road. The appeal property is a semi-detached house, attached to No 336. Both dwellings are of a typical mid-twentieth century design with pitched roofs.
5. It is evident that when constructed, the appeal property would have been a mirror image of No 336. Since then, it has been altered with ground floor extensions and dormer additions to the side and rear. Also, No 336 has been extended at ground floor level to the rear and solar panels installed to its rear roof plane. Despite these alterations, a significant degree of commonality still exists between the properties, particularly when seen from the front. To the rear, the uniformity is less pronounced, mainly due to the ground floor

extensions and the rear dormer. Nonetheless, the regularity of the upper floor fenestration and the consistent eaves line along the rear elevations still indicate the original matching design of the pair of dwellings.

6. While the proposal would include changes to the front and side of the property, the largest element would be to the rear. This addition would be most clearly seen from No 336's and No 340's back gardens. Also, it would be visible from Mowbray Road through a wide gap between buildings and trees. These would be more distant views but they would provide sight of the rear extension from public vantage points.
7. The rear addition would be substantial as it would project out a marked distance beyond the current plane of the house at first floor level. Moreover, it would have a vertical rear elevation with offset gable ends that would stretch up to the existing ridgeline. As such, the proposal would radically change the appearance of the back of the property by eradicating almost all of the existing eaves line and rear roof slope. Therefore, the scheme would not meaningfully reflect the current form of the building when seen from the back.
8. Furthermore, the size of the rear extension would result in the appeal property being much larger than No 336. Also, the consistency in terms of the position and size of first floor windows and the continual eaves line would be lost. As such, the proposal would lead to a stark imbalance to the rear elevations and so it would be unsympathetic to its immediate context. The insensitivity of the design would diminish the attractiveness of the appeal property, the attached pair of houses as well as the locality in general.
9. The Council raise concerns over the proposed cycle store. The front part of the site is already used to store bins and for parking and fences lie on the side boundaries forward of the house. The modest-sized cycle shelter would appear appropriate within this context and so it would not be harmful to the street scene. However, the acceptability of this element of the scheme does not address or override the identified detriment in respect of the rear extension.
10. The appellant refers to other developments that have been permitted. I am unable to draw accurate comparisons between these and the appeal proposal as I have been provided with limited information. However, none of the examples relate to the appeal site or properties in the immediate surroundings. As such, they would have been assessed in light of a different context and so they do not set a precedent that I am bound to follow with this appeal.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude the development would harm the appearance and character of the host building and the area. In these regards, it would not accord with policies 55 and 58 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 (LP). These aim, amongst other things, to ensure extensions respect the character and proportions of the original building and their context.

Living conditions

12. From the rear of No 336 and No 340, the rear extension would appear as a sizeable addition although it would be no taller than the existing house. Its side wall would be stepped so that only a small part would lie adjacent to the boundary with No 336. As a result, its main overbearing effect would be to the roof of No 336's rear extension rather than to any part of its garden. Furthermore, the addition would be set away from the boundary with No 340

and would not protrude beyond its rear elevation. Therefore, the scheme would have no meaningful effect on the main outlook from No 336 and No 340 towards their own back gardens.

13. The proposed terraces at first and second floor levels would have walls or obscure glazed balustrades which would prevent sideways overlooking onto No 336 or No 340. The terraces would provide elevated views towards the far end of the adjacent back gardens but in this respect the overlooking would be similar to that which exists from the appeal property's rear dormer. Obscure glazing would prevent views from the proposed side windows towards No 340.
14. For these reasons, I conclude the development would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of No 336 or No 340 in terms of outlook and privacy. In these regards, it would accord with LP policies 55 and 58. Amongst other things, these look to ensure extensions do not overlook or visually dominate neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

15. The proposal would provide appropriate internal and external space for future residents. Acceptability in these respects is a neutral factor in my assessment.
16. The development would allow occupiers convenient access by foot, cycle and public transport to a broad range of services and facilities. Also, it would make a more efficient use of land in terms of increasing the number of units on the plot. The additional residences would help boost the housing stock, although there is no suggestion of a current shortfall in housing land supply. The Council does not dispute the claim of a particular need for small units and the proposal would help meet this demand. These benefits attract positive weight in my assessment.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

17. I have found the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its effect on the living conditions of adjacent residents. However, this does not address or override the harm identified in respect of the first main issue. The detriment that would be caused to the character and appearance of the building and area means the proposal would not accord with the LP policies when read as a whole. The benefits of the scheme and other factors are of insufficient weight to justify granting planning permission contrary to the development plan. For these reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR