



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2022

by Claire Megginson

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E2734/D/21/3285997

81 Dragon Road, Harrogate, HG1 5DB

- 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 Brian Robinson against the decision of Harrogate Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02069/FUL, dated 12 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'loft extension with rear flat roof dormer and Velux windows & new timber clad garden room'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. I note that the application form description of development includes reference to a new timber clad garden room. There is no further reference or inclusion of a garden room in the plans and evidence. I have therefore dealt with the development as proposed based on the evidence before me and on the Council's description of development in their decision notice.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposed development on the character or appearance of the host property and the Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the North East Residential Area sub area of the Harrogate Conservation Area (CA). The CA is a large one, and as such character varies between different areas and eras of development within the CA. In the heart of the CA the buildings are typically constructed in carboniferous sandstone, reflective of the underlying geology of the town. Such materials can also be seen in the three storey terraces that occupy the south eastern side of Dragon Road, directly opposite the appeal site.
5. The appeal site is located on the north west side of the road, which is mixed in types of development and styles and includes a number of commercial properties. The appeal site lies at the end of a row of detached and semi detached dwellings and is the only property in the row to feature a two storey side extension. Directly adjacent to the appeal site is a public footpath and a railway line runs to the rear. On the other side of the footpath is a row of large commercial buildings of a square block construction. The road then opens out into a large car park and supermarket.

6. The Harrogate Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2010) notes that the north east residential area is mostly in residential use and states that the Dragon Estate, an area including the south side of Dragon Road, reflects its period and maintains an attractive consistence of character. However, the document also notes that 'the west side of Dragon Road consists of inter-war semis and post-war maisonettes, as well as unprepossessing commercial buildings, a garage and the entrances to supermarket and public car parks.'
7. Whilst I recognise the mixed nature of the street and the bulky nature of the adjacent commercial properties, I consider that the distinct row of semi detached properties including the appeal site makes a positive contribution to the character of the CA. The buildings in general have a simple but cohesive design and contribute in their own right to the appearance of the area.
8. The appeal proposal seeks to extend the roof to incorporate a rear flat roof dormer window and velux roof lights. The dwelling has been extended previously to incorporate a single storey and two storey side extension with an integral garage. The proposed roof extensions will extend the roof of the original dwelling to the rear and effectively increase the ridge height of the two storey side extension.
9. The proposed rear dormer incorporates a flat roof design and is situated up to the ridge height of the extended roof. Despite the presence of fencing and trees, and accepting that tree cover may have been sparser during my visit in January than may be the case in summer, from my site visit I could clearly see the location of the proposed dormer window from the public footpath. The depth, width and height of the proposed dormer window would dominate the roof, fundamentally altering its shape and unbalancing its form. This would be contrary to guidance within the Harrogate Borough Council's House Extensions and Garages Design Guide (2005) which discourages the erection of wide flat roof dormer windows, encouraging the ridge, eaves and sides of the dormer to be set down from the ridge line, up from the eaves and in from the sides. The appellant has suggested that they could amend the materials of the proposed dormer window to match to roof/brick walls. As this will not reduce the size or position of the dormer, while this change could potentially soften the effect of the scheme, it would not reduce the harm.
10. Whilst from Dragon Road the proposed rear dormer window will be less visible, the increase in roof height of the two storey extension will be clearly visible. These proposals will introduce a large area of bulk and mass to the roof and the cumulative scale of the additions will erode the gaps in the streetscene, diminishing the overall character of the row of semi-detached dwellings.
11. My attention has been drawn to other dormers in the area, including multiple examples in the surrounding streets. The circumstances in each proposal are likely to be different, and in any event the fact that apparently similar dormers may have been permitted is not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development. Furthermore, the examples cited do not appear to necessarily constitute an example of sympathetic development in a residential area and do not therefore justify the appeal proposal. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits, having regard to the character and appearance of the CA.
12. The harm that would arise would be localised and therefore the impact on the CA as a whole would be less than substantial when considering the provisions

of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). In such circumstances the Framework states that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Benefits in this case would appear to be largely private, and, as such would not outweigh the harm that I have identified to which I am required to give great weight.

13. Thus, my overall conclusion is that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the CA, and in doing so would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA. The proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA and in the absence of any public benefits to outweigh this harm, would be in conflict with Policies HP2 and HP3 of the Harrogate Local Plan (2020) and to the Harrogate Borough Council's House Extensions and Garages Design Guide (2005), which seek to secure high quality design that enhances or reinforces local distinctiveness.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole and all other relevant matters, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C. Megginson

INSPECTOR