



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 April 2022

by Rachael Pipkin BA (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/D/21/3286037

St Swithins, 26 Hill Rise, Chalfont St Peter SL9 9BH

- 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 Sohi against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - East Area (Chiltern).
 - The application Ref PL/21/2926/FA, dated 22 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and rear extension. Single and two storey front extension with gable and relocation of front door.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area; and
 - the living conditions of occupants of 24 Hill Road, with particular regard to outlook, the potential to appear overbearing and to cause a sense of enclosure and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Hill Rise is characterised by residential development in a range of different forms and architectural styles, including bungalows and 2-storey properties. St Swithins is a detached, one and half storey dwelling built in a Tudor revival style. It has a varied roofscape featuring a combination of front and rear roof dormers, gable features, a partial hip and a catslide roof. It has also been extended to the front and rear with modest single-storey extensions. Despite its varied and irregular roof form and extensions, the property has modest proportions and a relatively traditional appearance.
4. The proposed development would comprise various extensions to the side, front and rear to create a 2-storey property. The roof would be completely remodelled to form a front pitch and a substantial crown roof above the large rear and side 2-storey extensions. These would project a similar distance rearwards as the existing rear single-storey extension. The eaves height would be raised to form a full first floor storey and the ridge height would be

- increased by some 0.5m above the existing. The front elevation would feature a roughly centrally positioned 2-storey projection with a front facing gable.
5. The number of alterations proposed would essentially amount to a complete remodelling of the property. As a result, there would be little of the host property and its characteristic features remaining. Due to their excessive size, the extensions would engulf the original property, the character of which would be entirely overwhelmed by the proposals. They would therefore fail to either harmonise or integrate with it or appear subordinate to it. This would cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of the host property.
 6. The remodelled property would extend further forward and rearward over 2-storeys as well as extending across much of the width of the plot. Whilst there would be some single-storey elements at ground floor to the front and side of the property, the significantly higher flank wall would be much closer to the neighbouring property at No 24. With the increased height of the building and its proximity to the side boundaries, it would appear unduly large within its plot when viewed from the street. Furthermore, the gap would be reduced between neighbouring properties which would result in a more substantially built up frontage. This would be out of character with the pattern of development along the road.
 7. The formation of a substantial crown roof would appear bulky and also out of keeping with the more traditional pitched roofs of surrounding properties. This roof formation, as well as the increased height and significant depth of the extended building would be visually prominent and intrusive within the street scene, particularly due to the sloping topography of the road. The overly large size of the remodelled property would appear more apparent in the context of the much reduced, retained garden space. This would be particularly noticeable to the rear where the remaining garden would appear disproportionately small in comparison to the large size of the proposed dwelling. As a consequence, the proposed house would appear cramped within its plot.
 8. The resultant building would appear uncharacteristically large and obtrusive and would fail to respect either the scale and proportions of the existing dwelling and the plot within which it sits. As such, even though there is considerable variation in scale and massing within the streetscene, the scheme proposed here would appear discordant when viewed in the context of surrounding development.
 9. The Council's Residential Extensions and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document 2013 (the SPD) advises that extensions should be subservient to the host property. The appellant has argued that the absence of subservience does not always offer harm and I concur with that view. However, in this case, I have found it would be harmful for the reasons I have set out.
 10. This leads me to conclude that the proposal would cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with Saved Policies GC1, H13 and H15 of the Chiltern District Local Plan 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001) (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001) Consolidated September 2007 & November 2011 (the Local Plan) and Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District 2011. These policies together require a high standard of design which reflects and respects local character; and respects the scale, height and relationship

with the existing building and surrounding development. It would also not accord with the SPD which requires extensions to harmonise with the existing building, respect its scale and proportions and relate well to the characteristics of the site, neighbouring development and blends into the street scene.

Living conditions

11. Due to the sloping topography of Hill Rise, the adjacent property at No 24 is positioned slightly forward of and at a lower level than the appeal property. It lies to the east of the appeal site. There is a window in the flank wall of No 24 facing towards the appeal site which is a secondary window serving a living room as well as windows in the rear elevation, with those closest to the boundary with the appeal site, serving a dining room and first floor bedroom.
12. The proposed extensions would significantly increase the height and depth of the appeal property. Due to the relative positions of these adjacent properties, it would project some 7m beyond the rear elevation of No 24 along the shared boundary with the first floor set in from this boundary by approximately 1m.
13. Due to its substantial height and depth and the differences in ground level, it would appear visually intrusive, dominant and overbearing when viewed from No 24, reducing the outlook from the rear and side windows of this property. It would also cause some enclosure of No 24's rear garden. The limited offset of the first floor from this boundary would not be sufficient to mitigate the harms that would arise.
14. It seems to me that the significant height and rearward projection of the proposed extensions would be likely to reduce daylight and the amount of afternoon sunlight to the windows within No 24. It could also result in some overshadowing of the garden. This garden is north-facing but currently benefits from an open aspect to the east and west. In such circumstances, afternoon sun from the west is important in providing sunshine to the garden. The loss or reduction in this would be harmful to these occupants. In the absence of evidence to demonstrate that this would not occur, I am not satisfied that the living conditions of these neighbours in respect of daylight and sunlight would not be harmed.
15. I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the living conditions of occupants of No 24, with particular regard to outlook, the potential to appear overbearing and to cause a sense of enclosure and light. It would therefore conflict with Saved Policies GC2, GC3, H13 and H14 of the Local Plan which together seek to protect the amenities of adjoining neighbouring properties, to avoid significant loss of sunlight and daylight or an overbearing appearance for neighbours. It would also not comply with the SPD which amongst other things, requires development to not dominate a neighbouring property.

Other Matters

16. The proposed development would provide the appellants with additional space within their family home. However, this would not outweigh the harms I have identified.
17. I have been provided with no evidence that the existing dwelling fails to make a satisfactory contribution to housing stock within the Borough and there is nothing before me to suggest that an enlarged property such as proposed here

would be of greater benefit in this regard. I therefore give this very limited weight.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Rachael Pipkin

INSPECTOR