



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 April 2022

by J J Evans BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/22/3293783

6 Kerfield Way, Hook RG27 9EZ

- 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 Sean Egan against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02561/FUL, dated 1 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "Alteration to the existing single storey extension on the northern side of property to provide an extended first floor."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. 6 Kerfield Way (No 6) is a detached house positioned upon a gently sloping hillside within a residential estate that comprises mostly houses of similar ages and styles. A distinctive characteristic of the estate is the presence of repeated styles of houses, which gives a strong visual cohesion to the area. In addition, there is also a rhythmical appearance to the street scenes due to the repeated sizes, forms, and the spacing that exists between the houses, particularly at first floor level.
4. The appeal property is part of the short row of houses to one side of Kerfield Way. Like many of the other houses in the area, those in Kerfield Way are set back behind similar sized front gardens. Although the houses in Kerfield Way have a slightly staggered position in relation to the public highway, the repeated similarities of these properties contribute towards the distinctive cohesive appearance of the area.
5. The proposed first floor side extension would unacceptably detract from the visual cohesion of the area and the rhythmical appearance of the street scene. The effective loss of the gap that exists at first floor level between No 6 and the neighbouring house, 4 Kerfield Way (No 4) would be incongruously conspicuous in an area where the spacing between the houses is such a fundamental and repeated characteristic. Although the extension would have a hipped roof, the proximity of the side wall to the boundary between the two houses, along with

the positioning of No 4 higher up the hillside than the appeal property would combine to exaggerate the close juxtaposition of the houses to each other. The removal of much of the first floor level separation between the two buildings would appear particularly incongruous given the repeated presence of the open, spacious relationships that exists between most houses.

6. Although there are only a few houses in the row of which No 6 forms part, like many of the other similar styled and formed houses, the appeal property has a front facing gabled roof. This, and the repeated separation that exists between the houses at first floor level emphasises the slim appearance of the buildings. The proximity of the extension to No 4, along with the continuance of the ridge height and the absence of any set back to the principal elevation of the host building, would create a wide and tall building that would be at harmful odds with the repeated forms and separation of the nearby houses.
7. There are other examples of side extensions within Kerfield Way. However, they are single storey, and have a legible subservience to the host building whilst retaining the spacious separation that exists above. The size of the proposed extension and that it would entail the loss of most of the gap between the houses, would create an unacceptably cramped and enclosing relationship with the neighbouring property. Given the position of the houses upon a hillside, the impact of the extension would be clearly visible within Kerfield Way, and to a lesser extent when viewed from the surrounding area. Moreover, as this would be the only first floor side extension within Kerfield Way, the harm deriving from the proposal would be exaggerated, and the disruption to the distinctive visual cohesion of the street scene would be unacceptably prominent.
8. The appellant has provided examples of other two storey side extensions. Some of the houses in Bell Meadow Road have two storey side extensions, and I saw works were underway to the property near to the junction of this road with Kerfield Way. However, several of the houses at the eastern end of this road have been extended in a variety of ways, and this variety was strikingly different to the visual harmony that exists within Kerfield Way.
9. There is an example of a two storey side extension to a property in Bramshott Drive, but there is a wider gap between this extension and the neighbouring house than that which is proposed with the appeal scheme. Apart from this house very few others in this road have been extended in this way and the essential rhythmical spaciousness between the houses has been retained. Having regard to this and the differences between this example and the appeal proposal, it does not follow that this example forms a binding precedent for approving the appeal.
10. The extension would be of personal benefit to the appellant and their family. However, the planning system is concerned with public rather than private interests, and the significant harm that I have found would continue to exist long after the personal circumstances in this case have ceased to be relevant. Even though there is some local support for the scheme, this would not outweigh the substantial harmful impact of the proposal on the surrounding area.
11. Thus, the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. Having regard to the nature of the proposal the conditions suggested by the Council, including that to seek matching materials, would not overcome

this substantial harm. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (2020), Policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) (2009), and Policy HK12 of the Hook Neighbourhood Plan (2019). These policies seek amongst other things, high quality design that is in keeping with and makes a positive contribution to local character, and which reflects and incorporates distinctive qualities of its surroundings, thereby reflecting objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

12. Local residents have raised a number of matters, including light loss, construction disturbance, and overhanging guttering. Irrespective of my decision, land ownership issues would be matters for the relevant parties to resolve. As regards the other matters raised, following my findings on the main issue, I have no need to consider them further.
13. Finally, concerns regarding the Council's handling of the application and consistency of decision making relate to procedural matters and have no bearing on my consideration of the planning merits of the case.

Conclusion

14. Thus, for the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

J J Evans

INSPECTOR