



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 April 2022

by Mr Andre Pinto BA, MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/D/21/3289878

6 Orchard Close, Sutton St. Nicholas, HEREFORD, HR1 3AU

- 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 Graham Ridley against the decision of Herefordshire Council.
 - The application Ref 212651, dated 19 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is rear loft conversion to add two bedrooms and an en-suite, converting existing smallest bedroom into new stairwell to the loft conversion.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within a fairly quiet and secluded street, in the shape of a crescent, off Orchard Lane. Orchard Close is dominated by a series of semi-detached post-war dwellings, organised in symmetrical pairs, slightly set back from the highway, respecting the overall arc of the crescent. 6 Orchard Close is paired with 5 Orchard Close.
4. Although there is some small variation within the surrounding area in relation to some architectural features, namely fenestration, the dwellings along Orchard Close share similar defining features, which give the Close its consistent, harmonious feel. These shared features include overall appearance, scale, massing, siting, roof form, design and materials and define the character and appearance of the area.
5. The present proposal is for the construction of a rear loft conversion that, although it would be confined to the rear elevation of the appeal site, it would run the whole length of the building and would significantly change the angle of the rear rafter of the roof.
6. The construction of the proposed extension would require a new wall to be erected, on top of the existing rear elevation wall, which would see the pitch of the roof reduced to 10 degrees, as set out in drawing No. 2 - Proposed Elevations (2021). This would be at odds with the roof form of both 5 and 7 Orchard Close which is identical to the appeal site's.

7. The semi-detached nature of the dwelling, coupled with the crescent shape of Orchard Close, does mean that the existing gap between 6 Orchard Close and 7 Orchard Close allows for fairly unobstructed views into the side elevation of the appeal site. Consequently, as the proposed development would run the whole length of the existing dwelling, it would be easily perceived from public land.
8. In addition to this, the extension is to be located high above ground level, above the existing eaves of the roof, therefore making it more prominent within the streetscape.
9. The proposal would, therefore, disturb the harmonious feel that defines the character and appearance of the Close. Furthermore, it would also create an imbalance with the properties located to either side of the appeal site, which would be easily perceived from public land particularly from the existing gap between 6 and 7 Orchard Place.
10. Although I accept, as the Appellant has set in its Grounds of Appeal Statement, that residents and the Parish Council have not objected to the application and that the rear of the house is not visible from the majority of the access road, the proposed development would still be clearly visible from the public highway, particularly when approach from the south.
11. Also, as set previously in this decision, the crescent shape of Orchard Close, the layout of the appeal site in relation to the road and the high level of consistency with nearby buildings, does mean that the proposed development would be particularly noticeable.
12. Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) does state that planning decision should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
13. Therefore I do find that the proposed roof enlargement would give rise to an unduly dominant form of development that would harm the character and appearance of the area and, as such, be contrary to Policy SD1, which aims to ensure development makes a positive contribution to the character of an area, and Policy SS6, which aims to protect local distinctiveness, both of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy (2015), Policy 7 of the Sutton St Nicholas Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016) which aims to ensure that proposal are designed to protect and enhance the distinctive character of the village, and the Framework.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andre Pinto

INSPECTOR