



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 May 2022

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/21/3280998

8 Highfield Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire SP4 7HX

- 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 Lynch against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2021/04303, dated 21 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is attached 2 bedroom house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached dwelling situated on Highfield Road. The properties on the street primarily consist of pairs of semi-detached houses set back from the road with driveways and landscaping occupying the intervening space. Low front boundary walls denote the boundaries between the road and the residential plots, while the pairs are evenly spaced from one another along a consistent front building line. The wide gaps between them allow for views over the low front boundary walls of side and rear gardens, thus enhancing the sense of space in the area.
4. Therefore, it is clear from the street's appearance that careful attention has been given to the design and arrangement of buildings and the spaces between them; from which it derives much of its character.
5. The proposal comprises a two-storey dwelling that would adjoin No 8. Frontage parking and a rear amenity area are also proposed, and these would remove the existing side forecourt and garden of the host dwelling.
6. The proposed dwelling would be constructed very close to the side boundary, leaving only a narrow walkway. Given its height and mass it would noticeably fill the space that currently exists between the appeal dwelling and its side boundary with No 10 Highfield Road, while significantly enclosing the existing gap with that dwelling. Consequently, the proposal would appear confined within the plot in contrast to other dwellings in the street which largely maintain visible and consistent gaps between one another and side boundaries. Moreover, the proposed frontage parking, together with No 8 would likely give rise to an intensive arrangement of cars within the forecourt area, further eroding the spacious character of the street. The proposal would therefore appear inconsistent and out

of kilter in this context and would have a harmful effect upon the prevailing development pattern of the area.

7. Although the proposal incorporates a short set back and step down from the front wall and roof of No 8, this is very modest and does not sufficiently break up the resulting mass and scale the proposal would add to the pair of semi-detached dwellings. This would result in a sizeable and bulky structure that would appreciably be at odds with the reduced scale and more symmetrical appearance of most semi-detached dwellings that line Highfield Road.
8. The proposal would be constructed in materials to match the adjoining dwelling. Whilst this aspect of the scheme is acceptable, it would not overcome my concerns above.
9. Therefore, the proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. In doing so it would conflict with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted, January 2015) and the guidance within the Creating Places Supplementary Planning Guidance. These require, amongst other things, that proposals relate to the character of the area in terms of spaces between buildings and street layout, while also responding positively to the existing townscape in terms of building layout, mass and scale to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has referred to comparable extensions on the street that were approved by the Council. In the case of 5 Highfield Road, the first-floor extension has a greater set back from the front elevation, whilst also maintaining a wider gap to the side boundary. The side extensions on the pair of dwellings at Nos 27 and 29 Highfield Road, are more reduced in scale, whilst those properties are angled away from the street and the neighbouring dwellings to maintain a sense of space. Furthermore, those cases relate to house extensions, whereas the appeal scheme is a single dwelling. Consequently, given these clear differences, the weight which can be afforded to the examples cited in respect of this appeal is limited.
11. The proposal would provide an additional dwelling in an accessible location. It would also add to the Council's supply of housing, although, the addition of one unit would make a modest contribution in this regard. The moderate benefits associated with this aspect of the scheme would not outweigh the significant harm I have identified in respect of the main issue.
12. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide two off street parking spaces which would reduce any prevailing parking pressure along the street, while a deep rear amenity space would provide a functional area that would cater for the needs of future occupiers. There would also be no harm to neighbouring living conditions. However, the absence of harm in these respects would not overcome the proposal's unacceptable effect upon the area's character and appearance.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

RE Jones

INSPECTOR