



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2022 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J1860/D/22/3294233

4 Yewtree Cottages, Hillhampton, Great Witley WR6 6JU

- 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 T Lazenby against the decision of Malvern Hills District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01376/HP, dated 15 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is two-storey side and front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. No 4 is a semi-detached property located within a group of dwellings in the open countryside. To the east are two semi-detached properties whilst the dwelling to the west is detached. Whilst the dwellings are built from similar materials and are similar in scale, the two pairs of semi-detached properties vary in appearance from each other and there is no consistent building line.
5. Nos 3 and 4 are two-storey dwellings with single-storey side projections and side facing gabled roofs. Whilst they have different porches, they are otherwise largely symmetrical and retain a consistent linear frontage and simple form. The original uniformity in building styles and design remains coherent across the pair when viewed from the front, although they are different at the rear. The symmetry and consistency between these two properties makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the pair and the street scene.
6. The proposed extension would harmfully disrupt the relative uniformity of the front elevation of the pair of semi-detached dwellings. Although the roof would be set down from the host dwelling, the scale of the proposal would compete with the host building and would not appear subordinate to it, resulting in an extension that would be unduly dominant in relation to the existing dwelling.

Moreover, the introduction of a hipped roof on the front extension would appear distinctly at odds with the gabled roof form of the host dwelling and the pair.

7. While in some views it would be seen against the backdrop of the neighbouring property, which is set forward, the proposed extension would nevertheless be seen as part of No 4. The substantial front projection would appear at odds with the simple, linear form of that dwelling and its pair. Consequently, the combination of its depth, height and mass would unbalance the appearance of the host property and the pair.
8. Given the varied building line and the clear delineation between the semi-detached pair and the other dwellings, the proposed front extension would not disrupt any consistent pattern of development. Nonetheless, this small group of dwellings are viewed together in relative isolation within the same street scene. This group generally have single storey front additions which appear subservient and in keeping with the existing buildings and, given their scale, do not appear prominent within this street scene. The scale of the front element of the proposed extension would appear out of character alongside these subservient additions.
9. Consequently, even with the use of matching and reused materials, it would not integrate effectively with its surroundings or reflect the characteristics of the site, resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and this pair of dwellings.
10. The site is in a rural location set back from the roadside where there are limited viewpoints within the public domain from which the proposed extension would be seen. Nevertheless, it would be clearly visible to passers by, so even if such views may be relatively infrequent and brief as the appellant suggests, this does not justify granting permission for an extension which would result in harm.
11. Whilst it is suggested that proposed screening be secured via a landscaping condition, there is no such scheme before me and therefore it has not been demonstrated that it would mitigate the harm identified. Nor should it be necessary to screen a development from view to make it acceptable.
12. Therefore, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene. Consequently, it would be contrary to Policy SWDP21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (adopted 2016) which requires that development proposals must complement the character of the area, respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual quality of the local area. Moreover, the proposal would also not accord with the South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Overarching Design Principles (adopted 2018) which guides that front extensions should have a positive impact on the street and not look out of place.

Other Matters

13. Whilst I understand the intention of building the extension forward of the front elevation would be to preserve the privacy and light of the neighbouring occupiers, this would not mitigate the harm the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene.

14. I note that the Council's concerns related primarily to the front element of the proposal, however the proposal encompasses both side and front extensions so it would not be possible to assess them separately and they would be viewed as part of the same development. There is no lesser proposal before me and I have therefore reached my conclusions based on the totality of the appeal scheme.
15. A former garage might have appeared prominent within the street scene, being forward of the front elevation, although it was apparently partly screened by hedging. In any event, both the garage and hedging have been removed, so no longer form part of the character and appearance of the dwelling or the area. I have considered the proposal based on the current situation on site.
16. Rear extensions to other properties nearby are not particularly visible from the roadside. Where a two-storey side extension has been built it is set back from the front elevation, resulting in a degree of subservience and allowing the original symmetrical form of the pair to be appreciated. Consequently, those other extensions have not unduly disrupted the symmetry of the pairs of semi-detached dwellings in this group, when viewed from the public domain.
17. The appellant refers me to a property at Erryfields that was granted planning permission for a side extension projecting forward of the dwelling, as well as various other works. The evidence before me is that it is a detached property on sloping ground. The officer report provided also refers to the scale and design of a neighbouring dormer bungalow when concluding that the extensions and alterations would not look out of place. Consequently, the context of that property is markedly different to that of the appeal site, and that grant of permission does not justify the harm identified in this instance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. While the proposal would comply with parts of the development plan including those policies relating to living conditions and parking, it would conflict with the design policy SWDP 21. Given the importance afforded to design in local and national policy, I find that the proposed development would conflict with the development plan as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

19. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

L McKay

INSPECTOR