



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2022

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 7 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/D/22/3299009

51 Woodlark Road, Cambridge CB3 0HT

- 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 Gurkamal Gumman against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/05088/HFUL, dated 18 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a first floor side extension and part double/single rear extensions, hip-to-gable loft conversion and new garden room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. It is considered that the main issues are the effects of the proposed development on (a) the character and appearance of the host property and the streetscene and (b) the living conditions of the occupiers of 53 Woodlark Road.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling located within a primarily residential area of similar types of dwellings. Although there are some variations in design, the streetscene has a consistency of appearance with predominantly pairs of semi-detached dwellings being sited to the rear of front gardens which are landscaped and used for parking. There is a gap between the pairs of semi-detached dwellings which allows a view towards the rear gardens. Further, the predominant roof form of the dwellings is hipped which makes a contribution to the visual and physical separation of each pair of dwellings. By reason of these key characteristics, the character and appearance of the streetscene is both spacious and verdant.
4. As identified by the appellant, both along Woodlark Road and other near-by roads, dwellings have been altered, including by the erection of side and roof extensions. It was also noted that works not identified by the appellant were ongoing to the roofs of other dwellings. However, the planning circumstances of these other schemes are limited in content. Further, in some cases the design, scale and siting of these alterations do not make a positive contribution to the streetscene. For these reasons, only limited weight is given to these other

schemes in the determination of this appeal and the proposed development has been assessed on its own planning circumstances.

5. The proposed development includes the erection of a 2-storey side extension which would have a flank wall sited close to the shared boundary with 53 Woodlark Road. The hipped roof would be replaced by a gable roof form extending above the side extension.
6. The appellant refers to amended drawings which, although submitted to the prior to the determination of the appeal application, were not assessed by the Council. This alternative scheme has not been the subject of any consultation with neighbouring occupiers and nor has the Council undertaken an assessment of the proposals to determine whether the reasons for refusal have been addressed. For these reasons this appeal has been determined based upon the scheme assessed by the Council.
7. An extension has already been erected to the side of No. 53. This extension includes a single storey element with a side elevation sited adjacent to the shared boundary with the appeal property and a first floor flank wall set back from the boundary. The roofslopes of each element of this side extension slope away from the shared boundary. This approach contrasts with the appeal scheme whereby there would be a 2-storey flank wall sited adjacent to the shared boundary with a gable roof form.
8. By reason of the proposed development's scale and design, together with the extension to the side of No. 53, the characteristic physical and visual gap separating each pair of semi-detached dwellings would be substantially lost. This loss of a gap would be accentuated by the gable form of the proposed extension's roof which would also be uncharacteristic of the majority of the other dwellings fronting the road. The streetscene's key characteristic of pairs of semi-detached dwellings with gaps between them and the predominance of hipped roofs would be unacceptably disrupted. The loss of the gap would be detrimental to the spacious and verdant character and appearance of the streetscene.
9. Further, because of its gable form and the roof not being set down below the existing ridge height, the proposed side extension would not appear a subservient addition to the host property when viewed from the road.
10. On this issue it is concluded that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the streetscene and, as such, it would conflict with Policies 55 and 58 of the Cambridge Local Plan (CLP). Amongst other matters, these policies require development to respond positively to its context, drawing inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and create roof profiles that are sympathetic to the existing building.

Living Conditions

11. By reason of siting, the flank wall of the proposed development would be sited adjacent to the shared boundary with No. 53. Within the sloping roof of No. 53's side extension are rooflights which serve a bedroom and 2 bathrooms. The Council's concern is that the appeal scheme would reduce daylight reaching the rooflights serving the bedroom. Although there would be some reduction in daylight associated with the proposed development, the bedroom

of No. 53 possesses a large window which has an outlook towards this neighbouring property's rear garden. This window is the main source of daylight and outlook for this habitable room rather than the modest sized rooflights.

12. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development would not cause significant harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of 53 Woodlark Road and, as such it would provide acceptable living standards in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. CLP Policies 55 and 56 are not considered to be of direct relevance to this issue because they are primarily concerned with design matters rather than living conditions.

Conclusion

13. Although the proposed development would not cause significant harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of 53 Woodlark Road, this matter is significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the unacceptable harm caused to character and appearance of the host property and the streetscene. Accordingly, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR