

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2022

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 03 August 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/22/3299193

42 Northfield Road, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire, GU52 6ED

- 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 Peter Roberts against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02920/HOU, dated 11 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a part two storey, part first floor side extension, alterations to pitch of roof and insertion of two rooflights to rear, flipping of door and window to ground floor rear, blocking up window to first floor rear and conversion of garage to habitable accommodation.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a part two storey, part first floor side extension, alterations to pitch of roof and insertion of two rooflights to rear, flipping of door and window to ground floor rear, blocking up window to first floor rear and conversion of garage to habitable accommodation at 42 Northfield Road, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire, GU52 6ED in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 21/02920/HOU, dated 11 November 2021, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Preliminary matter

3. In the interests of accuracy I have used the version of the development's description seen in the Council's decision notice in preference to that in the application form.

Reasons

4. Northfield Road serves part of an extensive predominantly residential area. The Road is fairly lengthy and tortuous, providing a link between Aldershot Road and Pine Grove. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling, with the pair being one of three set on the frontage of this part of Northfield Road, with a small terrace beyond. Further along, within sight, at the junction with Northfield Close another terrace is apparent, with commercial units on the

ground floor and flats above. Semi-detached dwellings stand on the opposite frontage to the appeal property.

5. The Council's main concern lies with the proposed side extensions. The officer report says:

The mass of built form at ground and first floor level and the proximity of the extension to the neighbouring house (No.40 Northfield Road) would create a cramping effect on the street scene, at odds with, and detrimental to, the prevailing character of the area. If permitted, the extension would negatively impact the ability of the neighbouring property to carry out a similar extension without the two properties appearing visually joined, resulting in the appearance of a terraced block.

6. Thus, the Council's objection is principally based on the proposition that the relatively narrow gap between dwellings would be effectively infilled and if this were to be repeated too often the character of this part of the street would be altered to its detriment. The Council acknowledges the appellant's point that similar two side extensions¹ have been built elsewhere in the street, but considers the site specific circumstances to be different in those cases.
7. I do not share the Council's pessimism as to the effects of the proposal. To my mind, the side extension's roof would be set down from that of the host property, and whilst the new structure would occupy much of the existing driveway, its front wall would be recessed behind that of the two-storey element of the host property. Accordingly, when viewed from front-on, the extension would be perceived as subservient to the main building. From oblique views the extension would be obscured by extant development in views from the east; in views from the west, in view of its subservience, the development would be read as an acceptable, proportionate extension.
8. Should the owners of the neighbouring property at No 40 decide to undertake a similar scheme, it is true, as the Council suggests, that the respective properties would probably become linked. However, in that theoretical scenario, so long as the design, as is the case with No 40, shows subservience, the appearance of uniform terracing could be avoided should that be the Council's objective. It should also be noted that the appeal property is set at a slightly higher level than No 40, so that the properties' respective ridges and eaves are also at different levels. Moreover, one property is sited slightly forward of the other. These factors, in the theoretical scenario portrayed by the Council, should also assist in allaying its' concerns on uniform terracing.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not materially harm the character and appearance of the host property or its surroundings. Accordingly, I find no conflict with those provisions of policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032, policy GEN1 of the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 or policy 10 of the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan requiring new development to be sensitive to its surroundings, in keeping with local character and complement and be well integrated with neighbouring properties

¹ The appellant points to 3 recent planning permissions granted at Nos 55, 59 & 69 Northfield Road, all semi-detached properties

Conditions

10. In the interests of visual amenity, I shall impose the Council's suggested condition in respect of external materials.
11. It is also necessary, in the interests of certainty that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
12. The Council's suggested condition in respect of parking shall be imposed in the interests of highway safety, albeit in a slightly modified form.

Other matters

13. I have taken account of all other matters raised in the representations including the objection made by the Parish Council. I disagree with them on the design issue for the reasons set out above.
14. As to what the appellant considers to be similar development proposals in the street granted permission by the Council, I have taken these into account, but my decision on this case is made, as required, on its specific merits.
15. No other matter raised outweighs those considerations which led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1). The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2). The development hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with the following approved plans: Plan Ref: P100; P101; P102; P103; P104; P105 & illustration P106.
- 3). The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
- 4). The car parking spaces shown on approved plan Ref: P103 and illustration P106 shall be retained solely for car parking and shall not be used for any other purpose, and any additional hardstanding required shall be constructed in permeable materials.