



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2022

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B0230/D/22/3302334

40 Dovehouse Hill, Luton LU2 9ES

- 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 Mohammad Asif Hanif against the decision of Luton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01661/FULHH, dated 29 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice to reflect the amendment made to the proposals during the course of determination of the planning application, namely the omission of the single storey rear extension.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed two storey side extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. No.40 Dovehouse Hill (No.40) is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling with a single storey element to the side used as a store room. It is proposed to replace this store room, extending over two-storeys with a gable ended roof, up to the party boundary with No.40's non-attached neighbour at No.42 Dovehouse Hill (No.42).
5. At ground floor, the extension would continue the front elevation but it would be offset from the front elevation by around 0.75m at first floor and would have a lower ridge height than the host dwelling. The facing building materials and fenestration details would largely reflect those of neighbouring dwellings. As a consequence of the design, the extension would assimilate well with its host and the streetscene, rather than appearing unduly large or bulky.
6. However, Dovehouse Hill is characterised by two-storey dwellings that are set back from the pavement behind small front gardens or driveways with long

gardens to the rear. I observed during my site visit that dwellings have single storey side projections mostly offset from the boundary with their non-attached neighbours. At first floor, there is a uniformity and rhythm in the spacing between dwellings which provides a strong visual break or gap between the semi-detached pairs and a sense of spaciousness. I find this to be an important, positive characteristic of Dovehouse Hill and the surrounding residential area. There is a significant change in levels between dwellings on Dovehouse Hill and those dwellings to the west and southwest, such that the gaps between the pairs of semis give open views, over trees and landscaping. By extending right up to the boundary, over two-storeys, the proposed extension would significantly erode the gap between No.40 and its neighbour at No.42 disrupting the rhythm and uniformity of the streetscene and reducing the open aspect I describe. This would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

7. Moreover, whilst every proposal must be assessed on its own merits, to allow this development could encourage the submission of similar proposals which would be progressively more difficult for the Council to resist and which would cause cumulative harm to the character of the immediate surroundings.
8. My attention has been drawn to other examples of two-storey side extensions to dwellings on Dovehouse Hill and nearby roads. However, I observed on my site visit that these examples are usually at the end of the road, or close to a corner, rather than within a row of uniformly spaced semis, so the locational characteristics are quite different. I do accept that No.50 Williton Road is located within a row of semi-detached dwellings and has a very similar two-storey extension to the appeal proposal before me. I nonetheless observed that the vast majority of dwellings close by have retained the important visual gap or break at first floor. I have found that the proposed two-storey extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the presence of a similar example at No.50 Williton Road does not outweigh, or justify, that harm.
9. Further, I acknowledge that the proposed extension has been designed to maximise the internal floor area, providing a dining area at ground and a double bedroom at first floor. The benefits of providing versatile, energy efficient and long term accommodation for the appellant's family is apparent but they are not sufficient, in this case, to outweigh the significant harm I find to the character and appearance of the area.
10. Consequently, the proposed extension would conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies LLP1, LLP19 and LLP25 of the Local Luton Plan 2011-2031 (2017) which together seek high quality design that protects the streetscape and local character of the area.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

R Jones

INSPECTOR