



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2022

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/22/3294344

30 Queens Crescent, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 3RR

- 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 Martin Tofts against the decision of East Hertfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref: 3/21/1986/FUL dated 18 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 January 2022.
 - The application is for roof extension, single storey rear extension, increased porch width and alteration to fenestration. Construction of an attached 2 bedroom residential dwelling with off street parking, extension of dropped kerb.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice and differs from that used on the Appellant's original application. In Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development is the same as that used by the Council and as such I have used this description accordingly which I feel accurately represents the scope of the proposals.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area and upon the living conditions of future residents.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is primarily concerned with the side garden area of the existing number 30 Queens Crescent which is located on a prominent corner within this mid century housing area. The site is typical of such suburban areas whose design aesthetic appears to have been loosely influenced by the Garden City Movement of early suburban design. This typically manifested itself in relatively generous gardens, and neo vernacular design elements such as simple brick construction and hipped pantile or rosemary tile roofs.
5. The appeal site itself is located on the corner of Queens Crescent as it bends around before ultimately returning in a horseshoe type road layout back onto Elizabeth Road. The appeal property forms half of an existing semi detached

group of properties and, due to the layout of the area the property benefits from a large side garden that extends towards the corner. Notably, those properties extending at right angles from the appeal site, starting with number 28 Queens Crescent, stand forward of the end elevation of number 30 and as such the building line, where it exists, is largely staggered on this stretch of road.

6. To the rear the existing property has a garden with fruit trees and an open aspect to the rear whereby the layout of the houses maintains a good sense of openness here. The garden is currently bounded by timber fencing and is accessed through rear doors from the house. To the front of the property is an area of lawn that is characteristically hedged with a footpath running to the front door and parking to the side that is largely recessive within the streetscene. There is also an external store but no principal windows facing onto the corner garden here. On the whole the character of the property appears typical of such an area.
7. The proposal before me seeks to build upon the side of the existing house with a two storey, pitched roof extension that would create a new dwelling whose access would be from the front and whose principal amenity area would be to the side. Because of this the principal ground floor windows would face over the side garden and the rear elevation would be kept free of any fenestration.
8. Through extending the row of semi detached houses, the proposal would manage to reflect the suburban nature of the area through using matching materials, similar fenestration and a hipped roof design. The side garden would appear to be of an appropriate proportion for a new house and, although the private garden space for the existing house would be significantly lessened, I consider that the proposal would not create a garden that would be unusable. Moreover, I do not consider that the garden left to number 30 would undermine the character of the area as it would still maintain an open aspect to the rear and be of a reasonable proportion.
9. What concerns me however is the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the streetscene through the other practicalities that are necessary in order to house a new dwelling here. For instance, number 30 would lose any ability to park to its side elevation and this would result in the harmful paving over of the property's front garden. This would cause further harm through the removal of an existing garden and its replacement with vehicles. Moreover, the new dwelling would have a similar problem whereby vehicles would dominate the frontage of the property here. This would be more noticeably the case with the proposal to remove a large proportion of the existing hedge so as to accommodate occasional visitor parking on this prominent corner.
10. Such an impact, whilst meeting highway requirements would ultimately cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would undermine much of the aesthetic of lawns, hedges and gardens that contribute so much in defining the character of the area here.
11. Therefore, although I find much of the principal of this new dwelling largely acceptable and conforming to the Council's Policy requirements, I am unconvinced that the solution for the practical functioning of this plot represents a sound design solution. Instead, the proposal before me would

manifest itself as an overdevelopment and would cause significant harm to the streetscene for these reasons. As such I consider that the appeal fails to preserve the character and appearance of the area and as such would be contrary to Policy DES4 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 that seeks to minimise such harm to the character of such a well established area.

Other Matters

12. The appellant has directed my attention to other examples of new dwellings in the local area. However, I have no information before me as to the precise reasons or background to these developments and so I cannot be certain that the circumstances are the same as the case before me. Nonetheless, I do not consider that these examples would address the concerns I have outlined above with regards the impact of this proposal upon the character of the area through overdevelopment manifested through the harmful impact of parking.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR