



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/D/22/3306380

23 Upper Hitch, Carpenders Park, Hertfordshire WD19 5AW

- 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 Tony Peiris against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/0427/FUL, dated 8 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as a ground floor rear bay window; a new pitched roof to the existing flat roof property with rear dormer and front roof lights to form a loft conversion; and alterations to the fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Upper Hitch and nearby roads, including By The Wood, are broadly characterised by two storey terraces and three storey blocks of flats, which are flat-roofed, and which are typically finished in a palette of buff brick, light paint and darker vertically hung tiles. Notwithstanding very occasional exceptions to the prevailing form, including at 17 and 18 Upper Hitch ('Nos 17 and 18'), these features give the area a sense of uniformity and cohesion, and local distinctiveness.
4. Due to an existing side extension, the host is considerably wider than the other properties in this terrace. The addition of a pitched roof above the extended property would give it a significant mass at second floor level. Its resultant form would jar markedly with the rest of this terrace, which is two storeys high and has a flat roof. Having regard to the local topography, that harmful impact would be particularly apparent looking up the terrace from the south given that the host is the highest in the row.
5. In views from the east, whilst trees and landscaping partially obscure the site, which is also set down slightly below the road, having regard to the character of this terrace and the prevailing character of the terrace to the north, the scheme would appear incongruous in the streetscene.

6. The dormer would be set in from the edges of the proposed roof, but would nonetheless occupy a significant proportion of it. It would have a considerable scale, and whilst not prominent in the public realm, it would be clearly visible from the communal parking area to the rear and from nearby properties, where its form and bulk would contribute further to the resultant property's top-heavy appearance. As very few nearby properties have dormers, it would add to the harm that I have found that the scheme would cause to the area's prevailing character and appearance.
7. Nos 17 and 18 have second floor accommodation contained within gabled roofs, which were granted planning permission. However, whilst I would not describe those nearby properties as discretely located, unlike here, they are at the edge of the estate, rather than in the middle of a linear row of two terraces. In any event, they do not reflect the area's prevailing character, and those examples do not justify the harm that would be caused here.
8. The appellant states that the appeal decision cited by the Council at 6 The Watergate pre-dates changes to the prior approval procedure, which would allow this property to be extended at roof level. However, irrespective of that decision, I have dealt with this appeal under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act, and on its own planning merits in this location.
9. For the above reasons, the scheme would conflict with Policy CP12 of the Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011, and Policy DM1 and Appendix 2 of the Three Rivers Development Management Policies Local Development Document 2013. Amongst other things, and in general terms, these set out that development shall have regard to the local context and shall respect the character of the streetscene; and that whilst it should make an efficient use of land, it shall also respect an area's quality and distinctiveness with regard to matters such as scale, height, roof form and massing.
10. The scheme would conflict with the development plan and, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR