
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2023

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/D/22/3307355

7 Leighton Close, Coventry CV4 7AE

- 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 J Mann against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref HH/2022/1269, dated 18 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of a two storey front and rear extension, additional floor of accommodation at second floor level, new hipped roof design and alteration to exterior and 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 host property and the area, having particular regard to its location within the Kenilworth Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property at No. 7 Leighton Close (No. 7) is a large two storey detached dwelling located in a mature well-established residential cul-de-sac. Leighton Close is characterised by large detached properties of varied styles and design set back from the road within large spacious landscaped plots and a woodland setting that provides a verdant and open character and appearance to the area. No. 7 has a modernist style with red brick/white rendered horizontal elevations and timber casement windows, with flat roof canopies set back at first floor level and a distinctive standing seam metal butterfly roof.
4. The appeal site has an extensive planning history relating to proposals to extend the property. The appeal proposal would involve, amongst other things, the construction of a first floor front extension that would project out broadly in line with the front elevation of the host property and a first floor side extension that would be set back from the common shared side boundary with the adjacent two storey property at No. 5. The appeal site is set down lower than No. 5 due to the natural sloping topography of the site and the immediate surroundings.
5. The proposal would also create a new third storey element that would be set in from the sides of the host property. The existing butterfly roof would be

replaced with a new pitched tiled hipped roof that would be stepped down below the ridge height of the main roof over the neighbouring property at No. 5. The proposal would also involve the construction of a small flat roofed porch extension, ground/first floor rear extensions and external alterations.

6. The appeal property is on a large spacious plot and as such the extensions would not appear overlarge, relative to the overall plot size. Equally, the closing of the gap at first floor level between Nos. 5 and 7 would not appear out of character. From my site visit I noted a number of properties in the road appear to have been built to the side boundaries or in close proximity to such. The reduced space between the extended house and adjacent property would be offset to some degree by the open parking area along the front of the site together with the site levels, landscaping and boundary treatment along the common shared boundaries between the properties.
7. Furthermore, in elevational terms, I do not see the use of the dark grey horizontal aluminium fascias and window frames nor the small flat roofed porch extension and ground/first floor rear extensions as being materially harmful to the appearance of the property or undesirable in the streetscene in this suburban area.
8. The scale and form of the first floor front extension, new second floor extension and the new hipped roof would nevertheless still be a significant addition relative to the main property. As such, although set in and stepped down, the proposed first floor front extension, combined with the new second floor extension and the new hipped roof, would result in substantial bulk at the front and over the main dwelling that would be out of character with the more modest form and modernist appearance of the host building.
9. The new hipped roof would also result in a material alteration to the property's distinctive butterfly roof which currently makes a significant contribution to the roofscape of the host property. Whilst it would be set down with a low pitched roof, the proposed creation of a new hipped roof would be very much at odds with the modernist and contemporary form and appearance of the butterfly roof over the host property.
10. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's position, where the proposed extensions and roof alteration would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Leighton Close. The proposed first floor front extension, new second floor extension and the new hipped roof, by virtue of their scale, siting and design, would fail to achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property and would detract from the architectural integrity of the host property. As such, I consider that the proposed development would result in incongruous and out-of-keeping additions that would cause unacceptable harm to the host property and the area.
11. I have considered the appellant's arguments that the design and layout of the proposed development have been carefully considered and redesigned in order to minimise any adverse impacts on the host property and the area. However, whilst the use of matching materials and fenestrations together with the landscaping and the boundary treatment would assist in integrating the proposal with the host property and the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above.

12. Given the location of the appeal site within the Kenilworth Road Conservation Area (CA), special attention has to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. I consider that the appeal scheme, by virtue of its scale, siting and design would have a negative material impact and would fail to preserve or enhance the CA.
13. Given the modest scale of the development, the harm would be less than substantial but in accordance with paragraphs 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework, that harm should be weighed against any public benefits to the proposal. I note the appellant's desire is to provide additional living accommodation within the host property and to secure the optimum viable use of the site. However, I find insufficient public benefit arising from this proposal to offset the identified harm to which I attach significant weight.
14. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, including the CA. It would conflict with Policies DE1 and HE2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016 and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Document: Extending your Home - a Design Guide 2003. These policies and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that new development proposals and extensions to residential properties demonstrate a high quality design that respects and enhances the surrounding residential environment, conserves and, where appropriate, enhances heritage assets and positively contributes towards the local identity and character of an area.
15. In addition, the proposal would not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework that developments should seek to secure a high quality of design (paragraph 126) that are sympathetic to the local character (paragraph 130) and sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets (paragraph 197).

Other Matters

16. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, the various extensions and alterations on the properties within the surrounding area have different development characteristics to the appeal scheme. In any event, each proposal falls to be assessed primarily on its own merits and I am unaware of the full circumstances associated with these other cases.
17. I have considered the various benefits put forward by the appellant that the proposal would bring, including the scheme's high quality design, addressing the maintenance issues associated with the current butterfly roof and creating additional accommodation to meet the needs of the appellant's family. While I have given them some weight, these benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified. For all these reasons, there are no other material considerations to outweigh the development plan conflicts identified.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR