



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2023

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/22/3310219

13A Sutcliffe Close, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 3PL

- 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 Nicky James Goldwerth and James Nicholas Goldwerth against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/0826/HSE, dated 9 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'construction of a new front extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council's decision describes the development as 'construction of a two storey front extension and alterations to fenestration' and as this describes the proposal in more detail, I have considered it on this basis.

Reasons

3. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on:-
 - the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area;
 - the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers at 13 Sutcliffe Close in terms of light and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The development plan includes policy CS22 of the Hertsmere Local Plan Development Plan Document Core Strategy (2013) and policy SADM30 of the Hertsmere Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) which together seek to ensure a high standard of design. National policy in the National Planning Policy Framework has a similar objective.
5. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling which was built following permission granted on appeal in 2012. It lies within a residential area of mostly double fronted detached, hipped roof dwellings of a uniform style set on wide plots with generous spaces between dwellings. Those dwellings have a wide but shallow plan form and side elevations are modest in depth and not

dominant in the street scene. This results in a sense of openness and contributes to the spacious character of the area.

6. The appeal site has a narrower plot than most of the other dwellings and although it is of a similar style and double fronted, it is narrower in width than the other dwellings. It sits between nos 12 and 13 Sutcliffe Close on a staggered building line which creates some space between the dwellings, with the appeal dwelling sitting comfortably between its neighbours. It occupies a reasonably prominent position on a bend in the road at the junction with a cul-de-sac and its front elevation is seen clearly in views from Geddes Road. The northern side elevation is visible in the approach from the north where Turner Road bends into Sutcliffe Close and from the northern section of Sutcliffe Close. From the southern, cul-de-sac part of Sutcliffe Close the dwelling is not clearly seen, being set back behind the front elevation of no 12.
7. The proposed extension would be sited on the front elevation of the dwelling. It would project forward of the front elevation across its width with a crown roof to match that of the existing dwelling. The front elevation would have a similar appearance to the existing elevation.
8. However, it would bring the front elevation of the dwelling in line with that at no 12 and this would result in the loss of the staggered building line and would diminish the perception of space between the dwelling and its neighbours. As it would project forward by some 4m, it would result in an excessively deep and bulky side elevation of two storeys which would be set significantly forward of no 13. Its dominance would be exacerbated by the lack of any relief from side windows. The size and scale of the side elevation would be disproportionate to the existing dwelling and to those of other dwellings in the area.
9. I have noted that the appeal dwelling is set back from the highway and set in slightly from the side boundaries. The appeal site is splayed on the side boundary and additional landscaping is proposed. However, by reason of its siting, scale, bulk and design, the proposed extension would dominate both the existing dwelling and the street scene when seen in the approach from the north, reducing the sense of openness and detracting from its spacious character. This would significantly harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area and would be contrary to the development plan policies referred to above.

Living conditions

10. Policy SADM30 also requires that proposals have a limited impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers in terms of light and outlook, amongst other things. The adjacent dwelling at no 13 has an attached single storey annex which contains a ground floor bedroom window in close proximity to the side boundary with the appeal site. This is already set significantly further back from the appeal dwelling and the considerable depth and bulk of the resulting dwelling would be much more dominant than at present when seen from there. This would significantly harm the outlook from that window regardless of the appellants' offer to include brickwork coursing to create architectural interest and planting to soften the impact. Due to its position to the south east of no 13 and its size, it would also block out to a significant degree further light and sunlight to that window.

11. I have noted that the remainder of that property would be unaffected by the proposal but the occupiers are entitled to enjoy a reasonable standard of amenity from all habitable rooms.
12. I conclude, therefore, that the loss of outlook and light together would significantly harm the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers at no 13 and the proposal would be contrary to development plan policy SADM30.

Other matters

13. I have noted that the current neighbouring occupiers have not objected to the proposal but that does not outweigh the wider public harm that would be caused in terms of character and appearance. The Council's policy seeks to protect the living conditions of not just existing occupiers but those of future occupiers too. The lack of objections does not, therefore, persuade me to alter my findings in this case.
14. I have noted the appellants' wish for a larger family home and that the extension would have good sustainability credentials but those matters do not outweigh the significant harm that would be caused by the proposal.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed and there are no material considerations that justify determining it otherwise.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector