The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2023

by Kim Langford Tejrar LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) PGDIP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/22/3310192
25 Keep Hill Drive, High Wycombe, HP11 1DU

- 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 L Doyle against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
- The application 22/06089/FUL, dated 20 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2022.
- The development proposed is 'Householder application for construction of part single, part two storey side/ rear extension and loft conversion with roof lights in connection with creation of residential annex ancillary to main dwelling, 2 c dropped kerbs and associated landscaping and parking alterations.'

Procedural Matter

1. The description of development was changed following submission of the application. The amended description better describes the proposed development and therefore that is the description I have utilised for the purposes of the appeal.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a semi-detached dwelling on a corner plot which fronts Keep Hill Drive and turns its flank to Lowden Close. As such, both its front and side elevation are prominent within the street scenes. The dwellings along Keep Hill Drive are predominantly early to mid C20th dwellings of the same type and style. This creates a strong sense of place and uniformity to which the appeal site makes a positive contribution. The appeal site benefits from an existing two-storey side extension which was allowed on appeal in 2008 (PINs Ref. APP/K0425/A/08/2082273). The existing extension has a staggered front elevation and a lower roof height than the main ridgeline.

5. The appeal scheme would introduce a part single, part two storey extension to the flank and rear. The extension would create an ancillary annex with a front door and repeat the vernacular architectural features of the front elevation of dwellings in Keep Hill Drive, including a porch and large bay window.

6. The surrounding area is spacious and the appeal site benefits from a particularly spacious plot by virtue of its corner location, thereby creating capacity for additions to the dwelling.

7. Whilst the Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) advises that development should 'turn the corner' with architectural articulation to prevent massive flanks fronting roads, the appeal scheme would go beyond this. Instead, it would present a dominant competing frontage of similar proportions and scale to the existing front elevation. The extensions would not be subservient to the host dwelling and as such, the design, mass and scale would dominate the host dwelling and would not respect the proportions of the overall semi-detached pair.

8. Moreover, the resultant competing frontage would create the appearance of two dwellings within both roads. This would appear incongruous with the scale and proportions of the other dwellings in the vicinity and would appear as a discordant element in otherwise relatively uniform and regular street scenes. This would be exacerbated by the prominence of the site in two street scenes due to the corner plot location and rising topography.

9. The appeal scheme would therefore conflict with policies DM35 and DM36 of the Wycombe District Local Plan, adopted 2019 and the National Planning Property Framework. These policies seek, amongst other things, high quality design which is appropriate to local character.

Other Considerations

10. The appeal site benefits from an existing extant planning permission for a two-storey extension (Council ref. 20/07750/FUL). Given that the Appellant has particular need for an extension (addressed below), it is reasonable to conclude that the extant permission represents a realistic 'fallback' scheme. Whilst the appeal scheme is larger overall, the appeal scheme is of a similar height and overall floorspace to the extant scheme, albeit configured differently. However, the proportions and detailed design of the extant scheme would be subservient to the existing dwelling and would not dominate it. As such, the appeal scheme is not a comparable alternative.

11. The Appellant has expressed a need for the extension to make the property suitable for the independent yet supported living of an older relative. This is a clear private benefit in increasing accessible living space to meet the unmet housing needs of older people. I have accorded this substantial weight. However, I am not satisfied that such needs could not be met by other less intrusive and disproportionate adaptions to the property, which erodes the weight to be given to the benefit. As such, this benefit would not outweigh the harm which would arise from the scheme.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would conflict with the relevant policies of the development plan and no material considerations indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is accordingly dismissed.

Kim Langford Tejrar

INSPECTOR