

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 January 2023

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/W/22/3309375
10A Amwell Road, Cambridge CB4 2UH

- 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 Simon McKenzie against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01148/FUL, dated 9 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is alterations to 10A Amwell Road to return to its original 2 bedroom, 2 storey format and creation of a new 2 storey 3 bedroom separate house utilising the former extension to 10A Amwell Road in combination with a newly built element.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene; and
 - whether the proposal would provide adequate access for cycle parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The proposal is for a second sideways extension of the existing extended property 10A Amwell Road and then its subdivision into two dwellings. This would restore the original property 10A to its original size, making it mid-terrace, and create an additional end-terrace dwelling to one side.
4. No 10A occupies a corner plot at the junction of the main Amwell Road with a short spur road. The property faces the spur road, the end of a terrace of at present four dwellings. The extension would be a full two storeys high, with no fenestration on the prominent flank wall, and would be slightly wedge shaped, built hard up to the visibility splay with the main Amwell Road. This would give the front corner of the building a slightly acute angle, the rear corner being slightly obtuse, and with the extension projecting about 1 m beyond the current rear elevation, the gable end would have an asymmetrical profile.
5. In stark contrast to the spacious grassed setting of the small flat block on the opposite corner, the result would be an unduly built-up corner plot, with an odd-looking unconventional building projecting out towards the road junction

and unduly dominating the street scene. With its acute angle corner, lack of surrounding space for any meaningful landscaping and lop-sided gable end with no fenestration to relieve the blank elevation, the scheme would be excessively prominent and visually intrusive when seen from either direction along Amwell Road. It would constitute a jarring feature in its housing estate setting.

6. The appellant provides a detailed analysis of other spatial relationships on the Kings Hedges Estate, with 42 photographs illustrating these. However, the site visit revealed that none were directly comparable, with none comprising a full two storey height blank gable elevation built hard up to the visibility splay at a prominent road junction. The appellant also draws attention to five sites elsewhere in Cambridge, but these have different street scene settings. Whilst slightly closing the gaps between buildings, in each case the extension abuts a secondary or spur road and does not significantly disrupt the street scene along the primary road as would happen in this case.
7. For these reasons the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the street scene in conflict with Policies 52, 55, 56, 58 and 59 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018. These only allow the subdivision of a plot when appropriate to the surrounding pattern of development, require proposals to respond positively to their context, enhance the townscape where adjoining streets, reflect the existing built form and relate to surrounding buildings.

Cycle parking

8. The Council is concerned that the proposal would not allow easy access to the cycle storage facility shown in the rear garden. However, as the appellant observes, it would be possible to provide an improved access by altering the boundary fencing. This could be secured by condition, indeed the Council have suggested some suitable wording.

Other matter

9. The appellant's appeal statement indicates that the highway verge alongside No 10A was stopped up for highway purposes by the Magistrates Court on 11 November 2021, after which the area was incorporated into the rear garden and the previous 1.8 m close boarded garden fence was moved out to the new boundary. For the avoidance of doubt I make no observations about these changes which are shown as 'existing' on the application plans dated February 2022 and do not fall within the description of the application.

Conclusion

11. The proposal would provide an additional small dwelling which would make a useful contribution to local housing needs and have economic and social benefits for the city. However, these benefits are significantly outweighed by the harm that would result to the character and appearance of the street scene and the associated conflict with the development plan.
13. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR