



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2023

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/23/3313976

147 George Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4 2EJ

- 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 Paul Seymour against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02563/FHA, dated 11 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two storey rear extension at 147 George Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4 2EJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/02563/FHA, dated 11 August 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2491/A/1250; 2491/A/1; 2491/A/2 and 2491/A/3.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matter

2. For reasons of clarity, the description of the proposed development has been adopted from the Decision Letter and the Appeal Form.

Main Issue

3. It is considered that the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the host property.

Reasons

4. The property is a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling situated within a primarily residential area of terraced dwellings. The property possesses a 2-storey rear outrigger which has a single storey addition projecting further rearwards. In 2019, planning permission was granted by the Council for alterations to the rear of the appeal property (Ref 4/00699/19/FHA) which included a 2-storey

infill extension matching the depth of the outrigger and also extending further rearwards at ground floor level to match the wall of the existing addition. The proposed development incorporates the previously approved scheme but includes an increase in the length of both the outrigger and the proposed 2-storey extension so that the siting of the rear elevation matches the existing addition.

5. The property is situated within the extensive Berkhamsted Conservation Area where special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. This duty is echoed in CS policy 27 of the Core Strategy (CS) and Policy 120 of the Dacorum Local Plan (LP). No Conservation Area Assessment or similar document has been provided.
6. However, from what was observed, the key heritage significance of this part of the Conservation Area contained by the Grand Union Canal and the West Coast railway line appears to be related to the late Victorian/early Edwardian 2-storey terrace dwellings of brick construction with slate roofs and bay windows at ground floor level. These dwellings have minimal front gardens and, as such, are sited close to the footways of the roads. There are clear and consistent building lines along the roads, including George Street. At the rear, these dwellings generally have 2-storey outriggers with some properties possessing single storey additions of varying designs and scales. By reason of these variations, the building lines at the rear of the terraces of dwellings do not share the same high degree of consistency when compared to their frontages.
7. From Paxton Road, the rear of the property can be seen, albeit this is against the context of the 2-storey side elevation of No. 145 and its single storey extension which project further rearwards than the property's existing outrigger. The 2-storey outrigger of No. 149, the other semi-detached dwelling is smaller in scale compared to the one at the property.
8. However, at first floor level the outrigger at No. 149 is clad in hanging tiles which makes it a visually dominant feature in the streetscene along Paxton Road. The visual dominance of this outrigger is greater than the rear elevation of the appeal property, even as it is proposed to be extended. This greater visual dominance of the neighbouring outrigger would mean that the proposed development would not unbalance the appearance of this pair of dwellings.
9. When viewed from Paxton Road and the rear footway access, there are clear variations in the appearance of the rear elevations of the dwellings in the Conservation Area and there is also a lack of consistency in design of the outriggers adjacent to the property. The proposed development would not disrupt any clear building line associated with the terraces of properties fronting George Street. This is particularly the case because the property is not an integral part of a terrace.
10. By reason of the topography of Paxton Road, the appeal scheme would not unacceptably obstruct views towards the rear elevations of the terraced dwellings fronting George Street. The streetscape of Paxton Road would be protected.
11. Subject to the use of appropriate external materials, which can be secured by condition, the scale, height and bulk of the proposed extension would harmonise with the original design and character of the property. These are

amongst the relevant criteria of Policies CS Policies CS11 and CS12 and LP Appendix 7 concerning securing high quality development, including extensions, and their integration into the surrounding area.

12. For the reasons given, the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area and, as such, it would not cause harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the host property and, as such, there would not be a conflict with CS Policies CS11, CS12 and CS27 and LP Policy 120 and Appendix 7.

Conditions

13. The Council has suggested several conditions in the event this appeal succeeds which have been assessed against the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. For reasons of clarity, a condition is necessary to ensure that the proposed development is erected in accordance with the submitted drawings. The necessity for a condition requiring matching external materials to be used in the construction of the appeal scheme has already been identified. Accordingly, it is concluded that this appeal should be allowed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR