The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 April 2023

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/23/3315954
37 Cedar Walk, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 9ED

- 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 Mrs L Newson against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
- The application Ref 22/03307/FHA, dated 1 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2022.
- The development proposed is a roof extension with a gable and a rear dormer.

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 building and the area.

Reasons

3. The host property and No 39 form a semi-detached pair, which is prominently located on a corner of Cedar Walk. Although there are a few houses with a broadly single storey form in the road, the majority are two storeys high and semi-detached, and have a similar appearance in the streetscene to this pair. That appearance includes a shared two storey gable with bay windows, and one and a half storey side projections. Those side projections typically have a set-down hipped roof, along with a cat-slide over the front door.

4. These characteristics, together with the buildings' common palette of facing materials, and their fairly regular spacing and set back from the highway, give the streetscene a pleasing sense of symmetry, rhythm and cohesion.

5. As a result of the proposed infilling at first floor above the cat-slide roof, and the raising of the eaves in this location, the host would lose some of its articulation and locally distinctive form and character. This, together with the proposed raised section of main roof, which would not be set down from the principal roof line, and the introduction of a side facing gable, would significantly change the host's appearance and would substantially increase its scale and bulk.

6. As a result, notwithstanding the proposed use of matching materials, the scheme would jar with the prevailing character of the similar style houses in Cedar Walk; and as No 39 has not been similarly altered, it would markedly unbalance the appearance of this semi-detached pair.

7. My attention has been drawn to other development in the area. Of those nearby on Cedar Walk, Nos 12 and 18 have a broadly single storey form and are markedly different in style compared to this pair, whose appearance is much more typical of the road. Unlike this scheme, the two storey side extension at No 45 has a hipped roof.

8. Whilst there are similarities between this scheme and the fairly recently approved, gabled extension at No 14, that example is atypical of the road and, given that it forms one half of a semi-detached pair which is located between dwellings of a different style, it does not disrupt the rhythm and harmony of the streetscene to the extent that this scheme would. Finally, No 58 is on a section of the road some distance from this site, and where the buildings have a distinctly different character.

9. The Council raises no objection to the proposed dormer. In the context of the area, and as it would be unobtrusively located to the rear, I agree that it would not be harmful.

10. However, for the above reasons the scheme as a whole would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of this building and to the area. It would thereby conflict with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy 2013. Amongst other things, and in general terms, these require development to preserve attractive streetscapes and to integrate with its character, and to respect adjoining properties with regard to matters such as scale, height and bulk.

11. It would also conflict with the stance at Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (2004) that extensions should harmonise with the existing house and the area with respect to matters such as scale and roof form.

12. In its favour, the scheme would provide increased family living space for the occupants. However, that largely private benefit would not outweigh the significant harm that it would cause.

13. For these reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR