



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 August 2023

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1775/W/23/3315296

22 Elphinstone Road, Southsea PO5 3HR

- 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 Richard Stidolph against the decision of Portsmouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00884/FUL, dated 14 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is additional storey to increase the accommodation for flat 7.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Richard Stidolph against Portsmouth City Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. 22 Elphinstone Road lies in a residential street comprising of substantial semi-detached and terraced buildings. They are set back from the road on a uniform building line behind short front gardens that are divided from the pavement by low boundary walls. On the western side of the road, all the buildings have three floors plus a basement, with projecting bay windows extending to first floor level. There is a significant degree of ornamentation in the architecture, with arched doorways, decorative window surrounds, render bands, and brick detailing. Although the building heights vary to some degree, they are all topped with traditional pitched roofs that slope away from the road. These roofs have a dual ridge, with a central valley, reducing the overall height, such that the roofs are not dominant in the street scene. As a result of their uniform scale, form, alignment, and architectural quality, the buildings present an impressive and distinctive façade in views up and down the street.
5. The appeal property is one of a pair of semi-detached buildings, which shares all of the characteristic features of the others in the row. It has a recessed front door accessed via an ornate arched entrance, parapeted bays, decorative plasterwork around the windows, and a render band at first floor level. All of these features are shared with the adjoining property at No 20, giving the

overall building a symmetrical and cohesive appearance. As a result, the pair of buildings are an attractive feature in their own right, but they also contribute positively to the distinctive character of the street scene as a whole.

6. The proposed additional storey would be contained in what is described as a mansard roof. It would have steeply sloping roof planes to the front and rear, punctuated by vertical windows. The side elevations would be vertical walls, and the whole structure would be topped with a flat roof, which would be considerably higher than the ridges of the existing dual-pitched roof. The front roof slope would be set back from the front façade of the building behind a parapet wall. However, this would do little to disguise its uncharacteristically dominant presence. The resulting imbalance of the roofscape, and the loss of the continuous eaves line with No 20, would harmfully disrupt the pleasing symmetrical appearance of the pair of buildings.
7. It is contended that, being set back, the additional storey would not be readily visible, due to the height of the roof and the narrowness of the road. However, I saw that it would be easily seen from the pavement opposite the site, and would appear as an intrusive feature above the elegant, and balanced façade below. The flat roof would also be apparent in the gap between the appeal building and No 24, where it would appear as a bulky addition that would be out of keeping with the low-profile dual-pitched roofs that characterise the rest of the buildings on this side of the road. It would also be seen in longer distance views, up and down the street, where it would be a visually disruptive feature, breaking the continuous eaves line that caps the distinctive façade of this row of largely symmetrical buildings.
8. The rear of the appeal building is also readily visible in the gap between Nos 27 and 29 Ashburton Road. The flat-roofed form of the proposal would be very apparent from here, and would be noticeably out of keeping with the surrounding roofscape of traditional sloping roofs in Ashburton Road and Elphinstone Road. The use of materials to match the surrounding roofs would not successfully disguise its incompatible form. From all of these viewpoints, therefore, the proposal would be seen as a bulky addition, that would be uncharacteristic of the surrounding buildings, and would visually disrupt the distinctive symmetry of the sweeping façade on the western side of Elphinstone Road.
9. I recognise that there is a greater variety in the roof forms and heights of the buildings on the opposite side, with some gables and parapet walls fronting the road. Nevertheless, the scale of the buildings is similar, and the roofs are generally of traditional pitched form. In any event, the proposal would be seen in the context of the more uniform frontage on the western side of the road, where it would be an incongruous feature in the roofscape that would disrupt the distinctive façade of the buildings.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. The development would, therefore, be contrary to Policy PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan, which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that new development is of an appropriate scale, density, layout, appearance, and materials in relation to the particular context. The proposal would also fail to meet the aims of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework to achieve well-designed places.

Other Matters

11. The additional accommodation proposed would improve the living conditions for the occupants of the flat, which is a benefit of the proposal to which I attach moderate weight. I am also mindful that the proposal sought to overcome the reasons for refusal of a previous application. Nevertheless, there would still be significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, resulting in conflict with development plan policy. This harm outweighs the benefits of the proposal.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR