
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 September 2023

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2023.

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/D/23/3323890

37 Gibbs Couch, Carpenders Park, Hertfordshire WD19 5EG

- 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 Shah against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/0051/FUL, dated 11 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is to erect a 2-storey side and rear extension and part single storey infill extension (in addition to single storey rear extension approved under application No 22/1439/CLPD).
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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 local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a mainly 2-storey end terrace house within a predominantly residential area. It stands adjacent to a footway that links Gibbs Couch at the front of the site with St Georges Drive, beyond the rear. The proposal is a 2-storey side extension and a part single, part 2-storey rear extension with external materials to match those of the existing dwelling. It follows the Council's recent decisions to issue prior approval and a certificate of lawfulness for a single storey extension at the back of the main house.
4. With the new built form in place, the 2-storey front elevation of No 37 would extend across the full width of the plot albeit with the new element slightly set back from the main front wall. The proposed ridge line would also be set down from the host building. Although less than half the width of the existing dwelling, the new side addition would be noticeably longer than the existing house. Similarly, the new rear addition would extend across the entire site and so comfortably exceed the width of the existing dwelling.
5. The proposal is, therefore, a sizeable addition. It would elongate the built form of No 37, significantly enlarge its footprint, and add to its scale and mass. By adding disproportionate scale and bulk to the host building, the proposal would simply overwhelm the original form of the dwelling. In other words, an extension that is both longer and wider than the existing house would be so large that its intrinsic character would be spoiled.

6. The proposal would also draw the flank wall of the existing dwelling closer to the adjacent footway with a substantial gable facing this public right of way. With limited space between the new sidewall and this footway, the completed dwelling would draw the eye as appearing overly wide and large for the plot. By standing tall adjacent to the footway, the proposal would also further enclose the narrow corridor between the end of neighbouring terraces. When seen from this footway, the scale and position of the new flank wall would cause it to overbear and have an unduly imposing presence.
7. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Council's Core Strategy and Policy DM1 and Appendix 2 of its Development Management Policies Local Development Document. These policies broadly aim to ensure that new development is appropriate in design, and conserves or enhances the character and quality of the street scene and the local area. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which notes that development should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall qualities of an area.
8. I note that the proposal was refined in the light of feedback provided by the Council with no common ground reached between the main parties on the side extension, notably the first-floor element. Hence the appeal. Having carefully considered all the evidence before me, and assessed the proposal on its own merits, I find it to be an unsympathetic and unwelcome addition to the local area for the reasons given.

Conclusion

9. Overall, the development conflicts with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the policies of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan.
10. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR