



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 September 2023

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M3455/D/23/3326456

19 Gordon Crescent, Sneyd Green, Stoke on Trent, ST1 6BU

- 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 K Bithell against the decision of Stoke on Trent City Council.
 - The application Ref 69043 dated 6 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is two-storey side/rear extension (part-retrospective) with additional single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since the determination of the application, and the submission of this appeal, a revised National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) was adopted on 5 September 2023. The refusal reason references the Framework (albeit there appears to be an error in reference to it being 2012), however, there is no specific reference to the Framework within the Council's submissions other than them being an advocate for good design. It is not considered that this change impacts upon the determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character of the existing property, the adjoining property and wider streetscene.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a two storey, semi-detached, residential dwelling which is located at the end of Gordon Crescent. The proposal is submitted on a part retrospective basis, and I note that buildings works have commenced with work being undertaken on site at the time of my site visit as well as tradespersons vans being parked in the entrance to the driveway. A two-storey side and rear extension has already been granted planning permission under application reference 67945/FUL. The Council, and the appellant and plans, confirm that it is the additional single storey side addition to the rear extension which differs between the existing permission and the proposal which is before me. For the avoidance of doubt, the appeal will, therefore, focus upon the additional element of the extension in relation to the stated refusal reason only.
5. At the time of my site visit I found that Gordon Crescent is characterised by semi-detached dwellings which generally have a uniformity in their design as

well as notable and regular separation between each of the semi-detached plots around Gordon Crescent. This is acknowledged by the appellant within their statement. The appeal site is located at the turning head of the cul-de-sac and is, therefore, in a prominent position albeit positioned at a slight angle when viewed from the bottom of the road facing towards the appeal site. The Council's refusal reason is based upon matters relating to character, not appearance, which is a separate matter. It should be kept clearly in mind that appearance is the outward, visible, qualities whereas character is the sum of all qualities which distinguish an area.

6. I find that the existing permission, for a two-storey side and rear extension has already disrupted the symmetry between the appeal site and its adjoining neighbour. I note that the addition which is the subject of this appeal would be recessed behind the front wall of the already approved extension, which is itself recessed behind the original front elevation by around 5 metres. This would assist in reducing the visual dominance of the extension in terms of appearance of the street scene. Despite this I find that the cumulative extensions proposed would represent an incongruous feature within the street scene. Whilst the Council do not raise appearance in the refusal reason, and I note the appellant's comments as to visibility, I find that there would be general visibility of the proposal from properties within the vicinity along Gordon Crescent. I place more limited weight on such private views; however, it does contribute to impact of the proposals before me.
7. Whilst the siting of the proposal may limit impact upon the appearance of the street scene, I do not find this overrides the impact which I have identified to the character of the area with these matters, as previously outlined, being separate issues. The bulk of the additional extension would be modest in the context of the approved plans and original host dwelling combined; however, I find that cumulatively the proposals would result in a substantial increase in overall footprint wrapping around the host dwelling. This would occupy almost the full width of the wedge shaped plot (noted to be narrower at the front) with a series of stepped extensions which would be uncharacteristic for the area. The Council's refusal reason is specific to impact upon character. As a result of the interaction between the cumulative extensions I find the proposal would appear as inconsistent with the simple nature of the host dwelling as well as character and general spaced out nature of other properties within Gordon Crescent.
8. I note that both parties have made reference to an appeal at 26 Gwenys Crescent (APP/M3455/D/18/3195242) which is stated to be a proposal relating to a two-storey extension on a site also located on the turning head of a cul-de-sac. Whilst the Council have summarised comments which were made by the Inspector in that case, neither party have submitted a copy of the appeal decision as part of the appeal which is before me. The appellant has submitted a screen shot of the plans from that appeal. The design within that appeal was evidently different to that which is before me, and I find that the decision is of limited weight. I have considered the proposal before me on its own merits as outlined above in relation to character. A lack of objection from consultees, neighbours or interested third parties is a neutral consideration.
9. Overall, I find that whilst the proposal would have limited visibility within the street scene, or within public views, this would only serve to minimise impact upon the appearance of the street scene and host property. A lack of, or

limited, visibility does overcome the impact of the cumulative extensions upon the character of the host property and general character of the street scene as a result of stepped extensions which would occupy almost the full plot width in contrast to development within the vicinity of the appeal site. This latter point is well evidenced, and notable, as uncharacteristic from the general level of/pattern of development within surrounding plots on the site plan.

10. The proposal would be contrary to Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2009 Policy CSP1 which requires that development is well designed to respect the character of the area. The proposal would also be contrary to Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 (SPD) Policy R17 which requires that the front of buildings must relate to other fronts and SPD Policy R23 which requires that the form and design of a proposed extension must be well considered and complement the existing building and where there is a regular pattern and rhythm to the built form, must not unbalance that rhythm.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR