

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 December 2023

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th December 2023

Appeal Reference: APP/N1920/D/23/3328504
14 Gills Hill Lane, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 8DF

- 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. and Mrs. Shah against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application (reference 23/0924/HSE, dated 26 June 2023) was refused by notice dated 18 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a "*Proposed single storey front porch extension following demolition of existing front porch extension and fenestration alterations*".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey front porch extension following demolition of existing front porch extension and fenestration alterations, at 14 Gills Hill Lane, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 8DF, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference 23/0924/HSE, dated 26 June 2023), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a residential area of Radlett, to the south-west of the town centre. The area is suburban in nature, characterised by houses of different styles and types, mainly set back from the roadside with good sized gardens at front and rear. In the vicinity of the appeal site, Gills Hill Lane has grass verges and some trees alongside the footpaths, and it slopes upwards in front of the appeal site, to a sharp bend in front of St. John's Church.
4. Houses in the vicinity of number 14 Gills Hill Road are predominantly detached or semi-detached houses, although number 14 itself is part of a short terrace. It is located at the southern end of the terrace and has a garage alongside, with a crossover to the highway. The house is traditional in design, with a

slate pitched roof and brickwork elevations. It is in the form of a modest cottage and the three houses in the terrace are consistent in design although they are not identical. Small porches have been added to the front elevations of numbers 14 and 12 and other changes have evidently been made to the terrace, over the years.

5. It is now proposed that the existing porch at the front of 14 Gills Hill Road should be removed and that a new single-storey "front porch extension" should be erected. In addition, some alterations would be made to the fenestration.
6. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities. The achievement of good design includes providing good standards of accommodation, of course.
7. An emphasis on the importance of encouraging good design more generally is also to be found in the Development Plan. In particular, the 'Hertsmere Local Plan: Core Strategy' (adopted in January 2013) promotes sustainable development and encourages high quality design, notably at Policies SP1 and CS22. Policy SADM30 of the 'Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan' (which was adopted in November 2016) also supports development that makes a positive contribution to the built and natural environment and that recognises and complements local character, among other things.
8. 'The Radlett Plan' (as a Neighbourhood Plan) is also part of the Development Plan and it likewise lays emphasis on high quality design and the need for new development to respect local character.
9. The Hertsmere 'Planning and Design Guide' is a Supplementary Planning Document (dated November 2006) that is also relevant but it does not have the force of the statutory Development Plan.
10. The proposed new "porch" would add a significant feature to the front elevation of the existing house (and to the terrace as a whole). It would incorporate a small w.c. as well as space for boots and coats and, in consequence, would be rather larger than the existing porch. It has, however, been designed to be in harmony with the existing building. Matching materials would be used and the new pitched roof would echo the main roof, even if the pitch were to be slightly shallower. A gable feature above the front door would add a minor flourish without being overstated.
11. The new porch would be apparent in the streetscene, viewed on rising ground up Gills Hill Lane. The existing building is not of special architectural merit, however, and it would not be justifiable to prevent change in principle. The proposed front extension would be modest in scale and would make use of materials to match the existing terrace. Even though the proposed new porch would be larger than a minimal entrance to the house, I am convinced that it would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host building or to its surroundings.

12. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed extension would be a useful addition to the accommodation at 14 Gills Hill Lane. The contribution that the appeal scheme would make to the provision of residential accommodation in the locality, even though it would be limited, weighs in favour of the appeal.
13. In short, I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with the Development Plan as a whole and I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted, subject to conditions. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.
14. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of those suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal). I have concluded that conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - unnumbered Ordnance Survey Location Plan (dated 26 June 2023);
 - drawing number 271-PLK-01 A (Existing General Arrangement);
 - drawing number 271-PLK-02 B (Proposed General Arrangement).
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.