



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 January 2024

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/23/3326333

13 Stockfield Close, Hazlemere, Buckinghamshire HP15 7LA

- 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 Simon Dixon against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref 23/05073/FUL, dated 1 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a first floor side extension, garage conversion and front porch to form a separate 1 bed dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Simon Dixon against Buckinghamshire Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The host is sited towards the end of Stockfield Close. The properties here are mostly semi-detached with gables to the side, or detached with gables to the front. They are in a broadly similar style, finished in a palette of red bricks and dark tiles, with sections of hanging tiles or timber cladding on their front face. The buildings are arranged informally at varying distances from the highway, on fairly wide plots often with open frontages, thus giving the area a spacious character.
5. I observed that some of the properties have been extended, and that a few, such as Nos 10 and 11, have a rather different form with gables which project forward of their principal front face. However, whilst those two properties are close to this site, they are on a part of Stockfield Close which is partially separated from the rest of it by an alleyway and a tall hedgerow. The Close therefore has a broadly consistent and cohesive character.
6. In contrast to 13 Stockfield Close, No 14's garage is detached and set well back from the road. However, notwithstanding that slight difference, these two

- properties comprise a well-balanced semi-detached pair, whose form, style and materials are typical of the road.
7. The height, style, form and materials of the proposed extension would reflect the existing building. The site also has planning permission for a first floor side extension, front porch and other alterations (Ref: 21/05861/FUL) ('approved scheme'). The form and siting of the approved scheme would be very similar to this proposal, but its front face includes a garage door and one entrance to reflect its intended use as part of the host.
 8. In contrast, this proposal would result in the creation of a short terrace of houses. That would be at odds with the established grain, pattern and type of dwellings in this part of Stockfield Close. The proposed dwelling would have its own front door and a relatively narrow front face; and as set out at paragraph 4.15 of the Council's delegated report, these two plots, which would be separated by a planting bed, would be notably narrower than others nearby.
 9. Consequently, unlike the approved scheme, this proposal would not maintain the appearance of a single dwelling, and in the context of this spacious area of semi-detached and detached dwellings, it would appear cramped and discordant.
 10. Whilst the site is located just beyond a bend in the Close, it is nonetheless fairly prominent in the streetscene and also abuts an alleyway. The proposal would thus be clearly visible from public vantage points where it would cause moderate harm to the prevailing character and appearance of the area.
 11. It would therefore conflict with those parts of Wycombe District Local Plan 2019 Policies DM35 and CP9 which require development to improve the character of an area and to deliver a distinctive high quality sense of place, having regard to matters such as layout, and the retention of existing positive characteristics.
 12. It would also conflict with the advice in the Council's Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2017, and the Housing Intensification Supplementary Planning Document 2011, that development should respond to local context and character, with reference to matters including existing patterns of development, plot patterns and sizes, building arrangements, and building types.
 13. Although the appellant claims that the proposal would make an effective use of the land, it would not safeguard the environment as required by paragraph 123 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) ('Framework'); and it would also fail to comply with its Section 12 which requires a high standard of design that is sympathetic to local character and helps to maintain a strong sense of place.
 14. As pointed out by Hazlemere Parish Council in its supporting representation, the scheme would contribute a small, relatively affordable one bedroom house to the supply of housing, in accordance with Policy HAZNP1 of the Hazlemere Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2033. However, given that only a single dwelling would be provided, I give limited weight to that benefit.
 15. Summing up, I have found that the proposal would cause moderate harm to the character and appearance of the area. Its limited benefits would not outweigh the harm that it would cause, and it would conflict with the

development plan when considered as a whole. Consequently, having regard to all other matters raised, including representations by interested parties, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR