



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2024

by P Storey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J4525/W/23/3333164

46 Greenbrook Drive, Sunderland, Houghton-le-Spring DH5 9RL

- 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 Miss Sophie Scaife against the decision of Sunderland City Council.
 - The application Ref 23/01800/FUL, dated 11 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 21 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is described on the planning application form as "Extend bedroom at first floor to match line of existing parapet roof. Full glazed window and door with glazed balcony. Gable front to rear elevation for proposed extension and hipped back to main roof".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for development described as "Extend bedroom at first floor to match line of existing parapet roof. Full glazed window and door with glazed balcony. Gable front to rear elevation for proposed extension and hipped back to main roof" at 46 Greenbrook Drive, Sunderland, Houghton-le-Spring DH5 9RL, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/01800/FUL, dated 11 August 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Existing and Proposed Site Plans, Site Location Plan – 001 Rev 1

Proposed Plans and Elevations – 003 Rev 1
 - 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with specific regard to the effects on outlook, daylight and sunlight to the closest first floor window on the rear elevation of No 47 Greenbrook Drive.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a detached house in a residential estate predominantly comprised of similar properties. The house has an existing single-storey flat-roofed projection to the rear. The proposal would create a first-floor extension above this with a rear-facing gable.
4. The neighbouring property of No 47 Greenbrook Drive has a first-floor gable projection to the rear. Consequently, the first-floor rear elevation is staggered in a similar manner to that proposed at the host property. The recessed part of the first-floor rear elevation of No 47 contains a window and sits close to the side boundary shared with the appeal site.
5. The proposed extension would cover only part of the width of the house. Nevertheless, the part of the house to be extended is that which lies closest to the boundary with No 47. Accordingly, the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 47 is a relevant consideration.
6. Both the appeal site and No 47 have side gates adjacent to the shared boundary to access their rear gardens. The presence of these accesses ensures a notable separation between the buildings. The proposal would extend no closer to the boundary than the existing dwelling does. Furthermore, the first-floor window of No 47 is of a reasonable size and is set in from the side elevation. Although the appeal site sits on marginally higher ground than No 47, this difference is not significant and any effect resulting from the difference in levels would be negligible. Due to its scale and relative position, the proposed extension would, in all likelihood, be visible from the closest first-floor rear window of No 47. Nevertheless, it would not be of such scale to appear dominant or to create a tunnelling effect, and outlook from this window would not be unacceptably reduced.
7. No technical assessments relating to daylight or sunlight have been provided. However, because the window of No 47 would continue to enjoy an acceptable level of outlook, including visibility of the sky, I have no specific evidence to suggest the proposal would be harmful in terms of loss of daylight.
8. The rear elevations of both properties face southwest, and accordingly they will currently enjoy a good amount of direct sunlight. The host property sits to the south of No 47. Because the proposed extension would, in all likelihood, be visible from the first-floor window of No 47, it also seems likely that, due to its relative position to the south and southwest of the window, it would result in some reduction in sunlight. However, due to the relative scale of the extension in relation to the window, and the separation distance between the two houses, this would not be to an unacceptable degree. Moreover, the relevant window of No 47 would continue to enjoy a reasonable amount of uninterrupted sunlight from the west and southwest.
9. For the reasons given above, the proposal would retain acceptable living conditions for the occupiers of the neighbouring property at No 47 Greenbrook Drive and would accord with Policies BH1 and HS1 of the Sunderland City Council Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033 – January 2020, which together seek, in respect of this issue, to ensure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings, and to ensure development does not result in unacceptable adverse impacts that cannot be addressed through appropriate mitigation.

Conditions

10. Conditions relating to the statutory time limit and a list of approved plans are necessary in the interests of certainty. A condition requiring the external materials to match closely with the existing building is necessary to ensure the development delivers a high standard of design and reflects the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions listed in my formal decision.

P Storey

INSPECTOR