



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2024

by D Cleary MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/23/3333865

8 Langdon Street, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 6AZ

- 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 Eric OHare against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 23/01625/FHA, dated 2 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as a 2 storey side extension, single storey rear extension, new hip roof and internal re configuration
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the decision notice instead of the planning application form because it more concisely describes the development proposed.
3. Since the decision was made by the Council, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published (19 December 2023). This does not materially change the planning policy context in respect of the main issue.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Tring Conservation Area (the TCA).

Reasons

5. The Tring Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals (2019) document robustly defines the special interest of the TCA. Insofar as is relevant to this appeal I find the significance of the TCA is founded on the historic plan form, street density, and sense of enclosure, along with the overall variety and architectural quality of the buildings.
6. The appeal dwelling is an end terraced property which is located on the crossroad junction of Longdon Street and Albert Street. The dwelling is one of a group of four terraced properties, which are identified by a plaque on the front elevation as Portland Place. Portland Place has an individual design with a hipped roof, with prominent projecting eaves, and red brick front elevation with wide linear quoin detail providing a strong visual bookend to the terraced

frontage. Portland Place is a well-balanced group of buildings with the front elevation having a strong sense of visual symmetry. The appeal dwelling has a small set back from Albert Street and Longdon Street which provides a limited sense of openness in an otherwise enclosed street pattern. Within the immediate area, properties on Albert Street on both sides of the crossroads, broadly align with the side elevation of the appeal site, and close to the appeal site they are generally set behind small front gardens. The appeal site and its terraced grouping make a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the TCA.

7. The two-storey side extension would infill the existing small gap between the side of the dwelling and Albert Street. The limited space for the extension means that the proportion between brickwork and windows would contrast significantly with the existing spacing of openings within Portland Place. Furthermore, the narrow width of the extension would result in a squat addition which would appear out of proportion with the host dwelling and terraced group. Therefore, the extension would result in an incongruous addition which would dilute the strong sense of symmetry within Portland Place.
8. The side extension would be positioned at the back of the Albert Street pavement. This would erode the limited, yet important, sense of openness at the crossroads. The extension would be prominent, resulting a greater sense of enclosure within the streetscene. Furthermore, the side extension would project beyond the prevailing building line of dwellings on Albert Street within the immediate area which would disrupt the linear pattern of development.
9. I acknowledge that the appearance of the extension, with regard to its replication of roof form and detail; the use of appropriate materials including brickwork within its side elevation; the use of lime mortar; and, the design and materials of openings, would all be respectful to the building. However, these matters of design do not overcome the harm to the TCA that I have identified.
10. A number of examples of two storey side extensions have been highlighted. I do not have full details of the circumstances under which these were permitted. However, the individual design of Portland Place and its relationship with the streetscene is contextually different and, therefore, I do not find the extensions which have been cited to be directly comparable. In any event, I have considered the proposals on its individual merits.
11. Therefore, the proposals are contrary to policy CS27 of the Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy (2013), Policy 120 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004), the Framework, and s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Together, amongst other things, these require that development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.
12. The impact of the proposal would be relatively localised and the harm to the TCA identified above would be less than substantial. The Framework makes clear in paragraph 208 that where a proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I return to this in the overall planning balance.

Other Matters

13. A number of public benefits have been advanced by the appellant including that the design of the development would preserve and enhance the TCA. However, as I have identified in the main issue, I find the side extension to be harmful to the heritage asset and, therefore, I can only attach limited weight to any suggested design benefits.
14. It is acknowledged that the development would provide greater energy efficiency through insulation to the gable wall and increase natural light, resulting in a more energy efficient building and reducing energy costs. The improvements would also provide for better living conditions by reducing the effect of road noise. The provision of electric vehicle charging would also contribute towards tackling the effects of climate change. These improvements to the existing housing stock, would be a public benefit. However, given the modest scale of the proposals only moderate weight could be attached to these benefits.

Planning Balance and Conclusions

15. I have identified that the proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the TCA. The preservation of heritage assets are matters to which I am required to attach considerable importance and great weight. While there are some public benefits associated with the development, they are insufficient to outweigh the great weight to be attached to the harm to the heritage asset that I have identified.
16. For the above reasons, the proposed development conflicts with the development plan and with the provisions of the Framework in relation to heritage assets. There are no material considerations, which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cleary

INSPECTOR