



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 February 2024

by D Cleary MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/23/3334976

61 Chapel Lane, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 4BJ

- 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 G Styles against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref: 23/05865/FUL, dated 30 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 22 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as the removal of existing hipped roof, construction of additional storey with new hipped roof
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the removal of existing hipped roof, construction of additional storey with new hipped roof at 61 Chapel Lane, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 4BJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 23/05865/FUL, dated 30 March 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan referenced 22/0249/01 Rev A – Existing Plans and Elevations, and 22/0249/02 Rev F – Proposed Plans and Elevations.
 - 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.

Preliminary Matters

2. 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

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

Reasons

4. The appeal dwelling is a single-storey detached property with white rendered elevations, and a hipped roof finished with red tiles. The property is one of a group of four dwellings (Nos. 55 to 61 Chapel Lane). This group comprises a

pair of two-storey semi-detached properties (Nos. 57 and 59), with side driveways resulting in the dwellings being set-in from their side boundaries. These properties are flanked by the appeal dwelling and No.55. The appeal property is built on the boundary with No.59 while No.55, which is a detached two-storey dwelling with hipped roof, is set in, albeit only slightly, from its boundary with No.57. The dwellings have a consistent building line, set back from Chapel Lane behind areas of parking and/or gardens. There is a degree of uniformity in character and appearance between the dwellings in terms of spacing, roof design, materials and window alignment. However, the appeal dwelling is an anomaly in the group due to its single storey scale.

5. Chapel Lane rises gradually from the River Wye, resulting in the appeal property being at a higher land level than Nos. 57 and 59. Chapel Lane has a distinctly verdant character close to the River Wye, before the character becomes less vegetated and predominantly residential with properties of varied design. The appeal site is at the transition of this change in character. Adjacent to the appeal site is the access to Sandsdown Close, on the opposite side of which is an apartment development that fronts Chapel Lane, which is under construction.
6. The first-floor extension would continue the existing side building line on the boundary with No.59. The upwards extension, with its regular width, roof form and positioning of openings, would result in a balanced front elevation. The extension would result in a dwelling which is broadly similar in scale and appearance to No.55. The extension would continue the visual rhythm of development within the group. This would result in two detached properties visually bookending the pair of semi-detached, creating greater visual balance in the grouping.
7. While the development continues built form on the boundary of the site a meaningful visual gap between the two buildings would be retained. Therefore, I do not find that the extension would result in any significant erosion of openness or a cramped spacing between the properties. I recognise that No.55 is set in from its side boundary with No.57, however this gap is very limited. Therefore, the scale and siting of the extension would result in a harmonious addition which results in a consistent two-storey spacing between the buildings.
8. I acknowledge that the site benefits from an extant planning permission for a first-floor extension¹. That approval sees the first-floor element set in from the boundary with No.59. This set-in has been informed by the Householder Planning and Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2019) (the SPD). While that scheme has been considered to be acceptable in design terms, compared to the appeal proposals it has less synergy with the grouping due to irregular built form, and off-set vertical alignment of openings. I find that the appeal proposals result in a more balanced property itself, and would be more complementary to the pattern of development within the wider grouping.
9. I note the concerns with regard to precedent and cumulative effects of similar developments. However, the appeal property is located within a small and distinct group of dwellings where I have found the extension on the boundary would result in a balanced development within the streetscene. In any event,

¹ Ref: 22/07034/FUL

the effect of any future applications to extend a dwelling to the side, within this grouping, or elsewhere, would be considered on its merits.

10. For the above reasons, the proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed development would accord with Policies CP1, CP9, DM35 and DM36 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019). Together, amongst other things, these seek to achieve sustainable development which is of high quality design that respects the character and appearance of its surroundings.
11. Whilst the proposal would conflict with the advice of the SPD, I am mindful that this is guidance only, and regard must be had to individual circumstances. In this instance the individual merits of the case indicate that the scheme would be acceptable in design terms despite not complying with the guidance of the SPD.

Conditions

12. I have imposed standard conditions relating to the commencement of development, and to require compliance with the submitted plans for certainty. A condition requiring the development to be constructed from materials to match the existing dwelling is also necessary in the interest of character and appearance.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons the appeal is allowed.

D Cleary

INSPECTOR