



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2024

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/D/24/3338475

3 Kelsey Crescent, Cambridge CB1 9XS

- 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 Kessarla against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 23/03090/HFUL, dated 8 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as a 'first floor side and single storey rear extension.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development upon the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality; and
 - Whether the proposal provides sufficient cycle parking provision in accordance with the Local Plan.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site is located along Kelsey Crescent, which forms a number of streets in the locality that contains formally laid out speculative housing which appears to date from the mid-late twentieth century. The local area predominantly contains detached link dwellings which have a symmetry and regimented layout in their placement with a consistent building line and setback with open front gardens with a single storey garage to the side. The low nature of front gardens gives a very open aspect where spaces and visual gaps in and around dwellings and to the first floor level in between properties over garages experience glimpses to the tops of trees in rear gardens. These elements make up some of the positive characteristics alongside the large green verges present to the corner properties. On my site visit I noticed very similar functional designs, particularly those along Kelsey Crescent and to the cul-de-sacs behind which are long narrow two storey dwellings, with main gable fronting the street with hanging tiles, and long pitched concrete tiled roof with two chimney stacks which assisted in breaking up the length of the roof. The materials are also largely consistent and comprise of light and darker shades of cream and brown brick with concrete tiles and feature hanging tiles to the front gable. These are some of the elements which form part of the

positive qualities that make up the local character, appearance and distinctiveness of the area.

4. The appeal site forms the centre of a group of three dwellings experienced together along this section of Kelsey Crescent. Whilst No.1 has had its garage converted, the group of three dwellings maintain a homogenous and functional design with the two storey main component with hanging tiles to front façade, the single storey side garage, and the emphasis of visual gaps and spaces in and around dwellings with well vegetated areas which contributes to the positive qualities which are part of the local distinctiveness of this area.
5. In undertaking extensions and alterations to existing dwellings, the Cambridge City Local Plan 2018 Policies 55 and 56 are design led policies which seek that development responds positively to its context and draws inspiration from the key characteristics of the surrounding area, that provides a comprehensive design approach, considering, scale, massing, form, and the importance of spaces in and around buildings, amongst others. LP Policy 58 is specific to extensions to existing buildings and seeks that extensions reflect the existing building form and are sympathetic to the existing building and the surrounding area, particularly regarding the creation of new roof profiles and respect spaces in between buildings where they contribute to the character of the area.
6. The proposed extension would fill much of the gap over the single storey garage and have an awkward juxtaposition when seen in the context of surrounding buildings as well as the extension's relationship with the design of the existing building, such as how the roof encapsulates the façade and window to the rear elevation. The removal of positive aspects such as the chimney stacks and the visual gap between the dwelling would also be further detrimental to the character and appearance of the locality, and would be unlike anything in the surrounding locality. I appreciate that in the appellant's opinion that they believe that the building does not have architectural merit or 'make a statement,' however the planning policy is making considerations around character and appearance, rather than the merit of the building's architectural contribution. Even so, the design is in my opinion very functional and typical of its time and this is its significance in terms of its character and appearance. There are positive elements that reinforce character and appearance of this particular locality, dwellings as part of this development are functional which must be considered in new development. The proposed extension appears to have been developed in isolation of the context, and for this reason would be overcomplicated and detrimental to the strong character and appearance of the locality.
7. In conclusion of this matter, the proposed extension would not be an appropriate architectural response which would reinforce the positive qualities of the building and the locality. The loss of visual gap, removal of positive features and the poor relationship of the extension to the existing building would be detrimental to the existing building and to the greater locality. The extension would therefore be contrary to LP Policies 55, 56, and 58 as described previously.

Cycle Storage

8. LP Policy 82 seeks to ensure that development has appropriate cycle parking provided for occupants. From reading the policy, it appears more aimed at new residential development, than extensions; however I can understand the

Council's position in assessing this policy given that the dwelling is increasing from 3 bedrooms to 4 bedrooms.

9. Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that 'Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions.' Given that it would appear that cycle parking could be accommodated on site, in this particular circumstance, a condition seeking information as to cycle parking would be able to resolve this reason for refusal.
10. As such, taking the above into account, I do not find conflict with LP Policy 82, which could be resolved with a planning condition.

Conclusion

11. Whilst I have agreed with the appellant that the Reason for Refusal No.2 could be resolved, when considering the scheme as a whole against the Development Plan and material considerations, this does not outweigh the harm caused to the existing building and the character and appearance of the surrounding locality. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

J Somers
INSPECTOR