



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 May 2024

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B3030/D/24/3340361

31 Ridge Hill, Lowdham, NG14 7EL

- 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 and Mrs Harrison against the decision of Newark and Sherwood District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/01650/HOUSE, dated 15 September 2023, was refused by notice dated 21 February 2024.
 - The development proposed is the erection of front and rear extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. From the information before me, it would appear that the appeal property has recently benefitted from a planning permission for a front extension and a ground-floor rear extension. These were partially completed at the time of my visit.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are:
 - The effect of the proposed rear extension on the character and appearance of Ridge Hill, and
 - The living conditions of the occupiers of No 32 Ridge Hill by way of light, outlook and privacy.

Reasons

4. No 31 is a two-storey, three-bedroom detached house situated on the eastern side of Ridge Hill close to the northern end of the cul-de-sac. The immediately surrounding area is characterised by detached houses of generally similar designs and materials, set well back from the road. The appeal property has apparently been previously extended with a first-floor addition to the side above the garage. The current proposal is to extend the dwelling to the front by way of minor additions to the porch and lounge, and at the rear by way of a full-width single-storey element across the whole of the rear elevation, with a shallower and narrower first-floor element on the northern side, close to the boundary with the neighbouring No 32.

5. Policy DM5 of the Council's Allocations & Development Management DPD (DPD) indicates that development proposals will be assessed against issues of amenity and local distinctiveness and character. In particular, separation distances from neighbouring development should be sufficient to ensure that neither suffers from an unacceptable reduction in amenity including overbearing impacts, loss of light and privacy. In addition, the character of built form should be reflected in the scale, form, mass, design, materials and detailing of proposals for new development.
6. Policy DM6 of the DPD indicates that planning permission will be granted for the extension of dwellings providing that there is no adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring users including loss of privacy, light and overbearing impact. In addition, development proposals should respect the character of the surrounding area including its local distinctiveness.
7. The Council's Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) indicates that any proposed addition to a dwelling should be based around its successful integration with the host dwelling and its surrounding area. In addition, good standards of amenity for neighbouring occupants should be a crucial element of any householder development proposal.
8. The Council contends that the proposed development due to its scale and proximity to the northern boundary would result in an overbearing impact and loss of amenity in relation to light for the occupiers of 32 Ridge Hill. Also, the extension, by virtue of its scale, would not be in keeping with the surrounding area.
9. The appellants contend that they have worked with the Council to achieve an acceptable design and have reduced the scale of their original proposals in an attempt to overcome objections.

Character and appearance

10. The proposal would result in the conversion of the existing garage to provide a fourth bedroom and would include extensions at the rear to provide additional and reconfigured living accommodation over two floors. The single-storey element of the rear extension would extend across the whole of the rear elevation to a depth of a little under 4 metres. The first-floor element would sit above the northern part of the rear extension and would have a depth of a little less than 3 metres, with a pitched roof at right angles to that of the main house and at around the same height.
11. No 31 has an angled boundary running between the property and the neighbouring dwelling at No 32, such that the plot widens at the rear to project partially across No 32, whilst narrowing at the front. The properties on this eastern side of the road have plots that slope up significantly from the road to the rear boundary, and the houses are prominent in the street scene. No 31 has already been extended to the side above the garage, and the current proposal would have no significant impact on the appearance of the street as viewed from the public realm.
12. However, the properties in the vicinity of No 31 have relatively small rear gardens and No 31 now will have a substantial extension across the rear of the dwelling as well as what would appear to be a timber outbuilding in the north-east corner of the rear garden. The addition of a first-floor across part of the

ground-floor rear extension would result in an overall cumulative mass that would be out of scale with the original host dwelling and would fail to appear subservient to it, particularly given the height of the rear extension.

13. In addition to the above, I note that the additional bedroom results in the need for 3 car parking spaces to be provided to meet standards. Since the garage would no longer provide a space, all three spaces would need to be provided on the front drive. Submitted drawings indicate that 3 spaces could be accommodated but given the narrowing of the front garden area, this would mean that a very large proportion of the area would be given over to parking. This, together with the significantly reduced amenity space at the rear of the property, would add to the somewhat cramped appearance of the dwelling on its plot, particularly given the additional visual bulk of the first-floor rear extension coupled with the rear outbuilding.
14. Although the rear first-floor extension would not be visible from the street, it would add to the cumulative scale of the developments at the appeal site and result in a property somewhat out of character with the generally more spacious tone of the surrounding area along this part of Ridge Hill. On this basis it would conflict with Policies DM5 and DM6 of the DPD, and with guidance in the SPD.

Living conditions

15. The front and rear elevations of No 31 approximate to those of the adjacent dwelling at No 32, which lies to the north of the appeal property. The rear extensions at No 31 would extend out from the existing rear elevation by a little under 4 metres at ground-floor level and by a little under 3 metres at first-floor level. There is a gap of some 3 metres between the two dwellings, such that the proposed extensions would not impinge upon the 45 degree angle from the windows in the rear elevation of No 32. On this basis, there would be little overshadowing from the proposed first-floor extension on the rear elevation and patio area at No 32. Nevertheless, due to its height and proximity there would be some limited impact, chiefly in the winter months when the position of the extension to the south of No 32 would have some effect on sunlight reaching the rear of that dwelling.
16. The rear gardens of the two properties slope up to the rear and the fence between the properties cuts across the rear garden at No 32. This restricts the view from the rear patio area of No 32, and although the effect is limited, it adds to sense of enclosure, which is increased by the existence of the outbuilding at the rear of No 31 at a higher level, and which would be amplified further by the development of the proposed first-floor extension.
17. Finally, the current rear elevation at No 31 has obscure-glazing, apparently serving bathrooms, in the windows closest to No 32. The proposed first-floor extension would have a bedroom window in the rear elevation that would not be obscure-glazed. The occupiers of No 32 have expressed concern that this would result in diminished privacy. I accept that there would be a degree of additional overlooking but given the distance from the boundary and the fact that such an arrangement is common in residential areas, on this particular issue I do not consider that the privacy of the occupiers at No 32 would be significantly adversely affected.

18. In conclusion on this issue, I find that the proposed first-floor extension at the appeal property would have some harmful effects on the living conditions of the occupiers at No 32 by way of overshadowing and an overbearing nature. Although these effects would be limited, they nevertheless add to my concerns about the generally out-of-scale nature of the extended dwelling that would result from the proposals and that would conflict with Policies DM5 and DM6 of the DPD and with guidance in the SPD.

Conclusion

19. I find that the proposed extensions at No 31 would be harmful to the character of the area around this part of Ridge Hill and would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 32 by way of overshadowing and an overbearing outlook. Although these harmful effects are, individually, of limited impact, cumulatively they are sufficient for me to consider that the proposal should, on balance, be dismissed.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR