



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 June 2024

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J3015/D/24/3342192

24 Katherine Drive, Toton, Nottinghamshire, NG9 6JB

- 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 M Buck against the decision of Broxtowe Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00870/FUL, dated 6 December 2023, was refused by notice dated 5 February 2024.
 - The development proposed is the removal of the existing roof, raising the brickwork and construction of first-floor living accommodation in the roof-space above the existing ground floor, with external changes to elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used a combination of the descriptions of the proposal from both the application form and the decision notice in order to most accurately reflect the nature of the development proposed.

Main Issues

3. The Council accepts that the proposal would not result in harm to living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring dwellings, by way of privacy or light, and I concur with that view. On that basis, the main issues in this case are the effects of the proposed development on:
 - The character and appearance of Katherine Drive, and
 - The living conditions of future occupants of the dwelling by way of light and space.

Reasons

4. No 24 is a detached bungalow on a long, narrow plot situated on the eastern side of Katherine Drive. There are flat-roofed extensions to the side and rear. The proposal would involve raising the pitched roof by around 1.5 metres, extending the new roof to the rear to project over the existing rear extension, and creating additional rooms in the new elongated roof space. The new roof would retain the pitch of the original, but would have a long, low dormer extension on part of its north side, with obscure-glazed windows to provide light to a corridor serving three central, first-floor bedrooms.

5. Policy 10 of the Broxtowe Borough, Gedling Borough, Nottingham City Aligned Core Strategies Part 1 Local Plan (2014) (CS) requires that new development should be designed to make a positive contribution to the public realm and sense of place, and that it will be assessed in terms of its treatment of certain elements including street patterns, plot sizes, orientation and positioning of buildings; massing, scale and proportion; and materials, style and detailing.
6. Policy 17 of the Council's Part 2 Local Plan adopted in 2019 (LP) indicates that permission will be granted for development which integrates into its surroundings and ensures a satisfactory degree of amenity for its occupiers. All extensions should be of a size, siting and design that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and do not dominate the existing building or appear over-prominent in the street scene.
7. The Council contends that the proposal, due to its design, scale and massing, would appear unduly prominent within the street scene and would fail to respect the character of Katherine Drive. In addition, due to the first floor internal layout, it would fail to provide adequate living conditions, by way of lack of outlook and access to natural light for three of the proposed bedrooms. The appellant contends that the proposed development would not appear prominent on the site given the scale and setting of the neighbouring dwellings, and that there are other examples of two-storey dwellings in the vicinity.

Character and appearance

8. The appeal property occupies a prominent position at the point along Katherine Drive where it turns abruptly from an east-west alignment to north-south. When approaching from the junction with Stapleford Lane, No 24 becomes the focus of the view along the Drive, which is characterised by rows of detached bungalows on each side. In the vicinity of the appeal property these bungalows have gable fronts, and this basic design is carried on round the bend in the road to include Nos 24, 26 and 28.
9. To the south of No 24 is a detached two-storey house (No 22). This is set well back into its corner plot and is not a prominent feature in the street scene. It does not appear dominant in relation to the appeal property, because of its set-back nature and limited visibility. To the north are Nos 26 and 28, which are gable-fronted bungalows of a similar scale to that of the appeal property but set around 3 metres further forward in their plots. Nevertheless, there is a degree of uniformity about the appearance of the three bungalows. There is a slight slope down from No 26 to No 24, but this is not readily noticeable.
10. Given the prominent position of No 24 in the street scene and its clear visibility from vantage points along the first part of Katherine Drive, I consider that the proposal, particularly with its full-height gable front, would result in the property appearing significantly out of character with its surroundings. No 22 is taller than the appeal property but does not appear significantly so because of its set back nature and limited scope of visibility. Although No 26 is set some 0.25 metres higher than No 24, it appears in the street scene as virtually the same height. The appellant contends that the proposed increase in height at No 24 would result in it bridging the height gap between Nos 22 and 26 but, given the relative positions of the three properties, I consider that it would become significantly more prominent. It would be out of character and would appear out of scale, detrimental to the street scene.

Living conditions

11. The overall height of the bungalow would be increased by around 1.5 metres. The extended first-floor would accommodate large bedrooms to the front and rear, with 3 smaller bedrooms and a bathroom between. The bedrooms would be accessed from a corridor that would run along a dormer extension towards the front of the house and then through the middle of the new floorspace towards the rear. The three central bedrooms would have a maximum internal height of 2.1 metres and each would have a small roof light in the southern roof slope, which would be the main source of light and outlook for each room.
12. The front two of the central bedrooms would be somewhat larger in floor area than bedroom 3, and would be accessed from the front corridor with its dormer windows opposite. However, bedroom 3 would be smaller and located almost entirely under the sloping part of the roof, such that the ceiling would reduce from 2.1 metres to only around 1 metre across the room. In addition, the room would be accessed from the central corridor such that there would be little benefit from the dormer windows and limited additional light from a small skylight above. I do not consider that the design of this bedroom would result in acceptable living conditions by way of light or space.
13. Although this harm to living conditions would be slight, it adds to my concern that the overall character and appearance of the resulting dwelling would not represent high quality design and would, therefore, conflict with guidance in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Other Matter

14. The appellant notes the existence of a number of other two-storey dwellings around Katherine Drive. There are indeed a limited number of such examples, but they are concentrated at the heads of the cul-de-sac elements of Katherine Drive and Steven Close. They are not in prominent positions and represent a specific design feature found on corner plots and at heads of cul-de-sacs, which does not apply in the case of the current proposal at No 24.

Conclusion

15. I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area around Katherine Drive and would result also in some potential harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of the appeal property by way of limited light and space in parts of the building. On this basis, it would conflict with Policy 10 of the CS, Policy 17 of the LP, and with design requirements set out in the NPPF. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR