



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 April 2025

by **Megan Thomas K.C.** Barrister-at-Law

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 May 2025.

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/25/3362370

22 Walker Close, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire GU52 8AE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr R Newbigin against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application ref. is 24/02185/HOU.
 - The development sought is the “installation of 2 no. air conditioning units.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The development has already taken place but this has not affected my approach to determining the appeal. I have determined it on its own individual merits.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a three storey end-of-terrace dwelling. It is situated with its southern flank elevation facing Walker Close. Most of the rear elevation of the dwelling is visible when moving eastwards on Walker Close towards the appeal site. The row of dwellings, of which the site forms the southernmost one, face a long block of flats with a car park in-between.
5. Two air conditioning units have been installed, one on the front elevation and one on the rear elevation. The units are above the first floor windows in a central position on each elevation. They are metal and coloured white and sit on brackets with cables/pipes serving them.
6. The dwelling is made of red brick and the units are highly visible because of their contrasting colour, size, utilitarian appearance and because they are fixed at height. Notwithstanding that they are not mounted on the flank elevation of the dwelling which faces Walker Close, they are nevertheless readily seen from the public realm. In particular the front elevation of the dwelling is viewed in the context of a long row of dwellings which have a rhythm which is visually disrupted by the front unit. There are trees in the vicinity of the appeal site but none adequately conceal the units from the public realm. The rear unit can be readily seen from Walker Close and is an uncharacteristic and unbalancing feature on the appeal site and its immediate neighbour. The open and exposed locations of the units render them prominent

features which are detrimental to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

7. The dwelling is very well insulated and the appellant has highlighted the need to keep rooms cool in the summer particularly as the sleep of his children is disrupted when it is too hot. He also has solar panels and uses less fossil fuels by using electricity to cool or heat the house throughout the year. I also appreciate that care was taken to attempt to find a location for the units which he considered would reduce the visual impact and would not encroach on any of the small amount of garden space he has. A number of factors had to be considered including distance from neighbours owing to potential noise disturbance and avoiding areas where leaves might conflict with the units. I have sympathy with the many factors that had to be considered but I consider that the units cause unacceptable harm which is not outweighed by these other considerations.
8. The appellant has suggested that a brick-patterned vinyl sticker could be used to cover some, but not all, parts of the units. There is insufficient information before me to enable me to judge whether or not that would sufficiently and robustly mitigate the visual harm caused by the units.
9. It is not within my remit to cast around for other potential planning conditions that might overcome the harm identified.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the development results in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area and is in conflict with policy NBE9 on design in the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (adopted 2020) and saved policy GEN1 of Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006.

Conclusion

11. Having considered all representations made, for the reasons given above, I dismiss the appeal.

Megan Thomas K.C.
Inspector