



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 2 February 2021

by Mr Martin Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X1735/D/20/3263863
55 Hillmead Gardens, Havant, PO9 3NN

- 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 Chris Williams against the decision of Havant Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/20/00138, dated 14 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 2 storey side extension and dormer to rear of existing and proposed roof to provide habitable accommodation in loft space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, and
 - ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of 54 Hillmead Gardens, with particular reference to loss of sunlight and overbearing effect.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached, two-storey dwelling with a driveway at the side providing access to a garage at the rear. This layout is shared with its immediate neighbours, where the position of two driveways alongside each other provide for generous spacing between pairs of properties, creating a discernible rhythm of buildings to this part of the street.
4. The proposed scheme would result in the erection of a side extension to the property, over the existing side driveway. This would bring built development closer to the neighbouring property and reduce the spacing between dwellings, significantly reducing the gap that would remain appreciable between the buildings. In this respect, I note that there are no other properties with similar side extensions, and as such the proposal would be uncharacteristic of the layout of nearby buildings, would disrupt the identifiable rhythm of the built form and would have a discordant appearance in the streetscene. I acknowledge the close proximity of some properties to side boundaries further along the street as well as in the wider area, however the appearance of these is distinct from the grouping of semi-detached units of which the appeal

property is part and does little to persuade me of the acceptability of the proposal.

5. While the extension is set back from the front elevation of the host property and set down below the roof ridge thereby appearing as a subservient extension, this does not diminish that it would appear as an incongruous addition, undermining the characteristic pattern of development that is clearly perceptible along this part of the street. In this respect, the proposal would fail to respond appropriately to its context.
6. Accordingly, whilst there would be no harm to the host property, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Thus, the scheme would conflict with policy CS16 of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011) (the Core Strategy), insofar as it seeks to ensure development responds to local context. There would also be conflict with the Council's Housing Supplementary Planning Document, which advises that the width of buildings should be similar to that in the local area, looking to immediate neighbours first.

Living conditions

7. The proposed extension would be positioned to the north of 54 Hillmead (No 54). To the side elevation, at ground floor level of No 54 is the main entrance door and a window serving the kitchen, whilst to the first floor are two windows and these serve a landing and a bedroom.
8. Given the orientation of the property, sunlight would only reach the north facing elevation of No 54 for a limited period each day. Thus, for significant portions of the day there would be no direct sunlight reaching the elevation. The addition of the proposed extension would further limit this, however given the existing arrangement of properties, including their proximity, together with the relatively narrow width of the extension, this increase would not be of such an extent so as to result in an unacceptable loss of sunlight reaching No 54.
9. The proposed extension would be readily apparent from the windows of No 54 which face the appeal site. However, I am conscious that it would be located to the side of the property. While this elevation contains the front door, it was clear that the windows providing the main outlook from the property were to the front and rear elevations. To the ground floor, while a kitchen window would face the proposal, the existing outlook from this window was towards a driveway, with the potential for parked cars and other paraphernalia to already be visible in proximity. As such, the presence of the extension would not, given its open design at ground floor level, create an unacceptable sense of enclosure when viewed from this window. Furthermore, I am conscious that there was also a door to the kitchen facing the garden which provided an additional outlook which would be unaffected by the proposal.
10. The front door provides little in the way of existing outlook and as such the presence of the appeal scheme would not have any appreciable overbearing effect on the view from here. I accept that the extension would be located close to the boundary and therefore close to the main access to the property and its approach. However, given that there is an existing driveway adjoining, that this is a utilitarian space and the extension would not protrude beyond the front elevation, the proposal would not unduly dominate the space near to the front door.

11. To the first floor one of the windows on the side elevation serves a landing and the other a bedroom. I appreciate that the extension would be obvious in views from these windows, nonetheless it would not block all views, with albeit more limited views remaining available from the bedroom, to the frontage of neighbouring properties and the road. While from the landing window views would again be more limited than currently, the proposal would not impinge on the view to such an extent as to be unacceptable, particularly given that the window serves a landing. Consequently, there would also not be an unacceptable sense of enclosure, and therefore an overbearing effect, experienced from the first-floor windows.
12. Accordingly, the proposal would not result in unacceptable living conditions for the occupiers of 54 Hillmead Gardens, with particular reference to loss of sunlight and overbearing effect. Thus, the proposal would accord with policy CS16 of the Core Strategy, insofar as it seeks to ensure development does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbours.

Conclusion

13. I have found that the scheme would not result in unacceptable living conditions for neighbours. However, I have found harm to the character and appearance of the area; this matter is decisive. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR