



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2018

by Mrs J Wilson BA BTP MRTPI DMS

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th June 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/X1735/W/3191541
17 Lockerley Road, Havant PO9 2HB

- 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 Raife West of Havant Housing Association against the decision of Havant Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/17/00773, dated 14 July 2017, was refused by notice dated 13 October 2017.
 - The development proposed is the construction of 6 number 1-bed studio apartments on land adjacent to 17 Lockerley Road, Havant.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. St Albans Road is primarily straight, with a spacious and open character which is heavily defined by significant mature tree planting along the roadside and which is particularly notable and reinforced at road junctions. Buildings are typically set back from the road with additional space from pavements and verges either side. The existing property sits apart from other housing. It occupies a corner site adjacent to a car park serving the adjacent multi storey residential block to the west and to a disused multi-level car park and garage court to the north. On the opposite side of the road is a school building with substantial open land. The existing property is plainly visible from the road between two areas of mature planting where there is an appreciable gap to the roadside edge which reinforces the spacious and open character of the area.
4. The introduction of a side extension projecting out to the edge of the site at the back edge of the footway, coupled with a deeper footprint than the existing structure, would represent a significant increase in the prominence and massing of the building and would represent an addition of substantial bulk and mass to the property. This would result in a structure which would be both dominant and overbearing in the street scene and at odds with, and harmful to, the prevailing character of the area.

5. In support of the appeal, the appellants draw attention to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in the context that good design should contribute positively and that decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or stifle innovation. These comments are noted indeed there is no specific issue with the architectural detailing of the structure per se. In this location however the trees soften the perception of a specific building line and the extent of the bulk and massing of the enlarged building would be more prominent in this context. It would impinge on the open area and compromise the appreciable gap between the building and the edge of the highway where verges either side of the footway also contribute to the open feel of the site. Whilst the building would have windows and doors to the main frontage as compared to the current blank gable set behind a timber close boarded fence, this would not overcome my concerns with regard to the overall bulk and massing of the structure.
6. My attention has been drawn to examples locally where gable features are located hard against footways though the examples given are set in very different contexts where terraces are located end on to a main road and are not, in my view, comparable situation with this proposal.
7. For the reasons set out the proposal conflicts with policies CS16 and DM7 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) 2011, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Havant Borough Design Guide SPD (2011). These policies and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development respects local context and responds to local character; using characteristics, including building lines, to inform the design of new development and ensures that any new building is in keeping with the surrounding area.

Other matters

8. The scheme would provide additional supported living flats for a housing association. The appellants argue that this specialised housing provision should be set against the impact on the visual amenities of the site. Whilst additional provision of specialised housing is a recognised benefit it is supported by Policy DM7 of the Core Strategy where specific criteria are met. In this case the context of the enlarged building is not in keeping with the surrounding area and therefore conflicts with Policy DM7.

Conclusion

9. Whilst I have found there to be benefit from the scheme in relation to the provision of additional specialised housing this benefit is outweighed by the harm which I have identified. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Janet Wilson

INSPECTOR