

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2022

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X1735/D/22/3300536

140 Southwood Road, Hayling Island, PO11 9QH

- 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 & Mrs P & A Head against the decision of Havant Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/22/00068, dated 3 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is front ground floor and rear second storey extensions with first floor balcony.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on a) the character and appearance of the host property and the locality and b) living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached bungalow dwelling in a stretch of varied style and size of properties which front Southwood Road and run through to the beachside prom at their rear. The area is of residential character and pleasing sense and appearance of 'seaside suburbia'. The proposal is as described above.
 4. Designing any visually satisfactory first floor development on one side of a pair of semi-detached bungalows would almost always be difficult architecturally. I appreciate the thought here of, for example, a significant frontage set back and an asymmetrical pitch. Unfortunately, the outcome would nevertheless be a severely unbalanced pair of properties; there would be an upper level which would look bulky and incongruous; and the scheme would appear somewhat contrived with oddly positioned vertical walling and excessive top-heavy glazing. The development and its relationship to the surrounds would look alien and ill-at-ease in the immediate and wider context.
 5. Policy CS16 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) 2011 (LP), amongst other matters, seeks to ensure that new development encompasses high quality design; reflecting local character and respecting context, embodying suitable window proportions, and generally being appropriate in overall scale and form. For the reasons given above I conclude that there
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would be conflict with this policy. CS16 has objectives that are also reflected in the Borough Design Guide 2011 SPD (SPD). In my opinion the scheme would run contrary to its main aesthetic aims albeit this publication cannot be expected to cover every eventuality.

Living conditions

6. The appeal scheme would lead to vertical walling close to, and in front of, a number of side-facing windows on the adjoining block of flats (No. 144) and there is no doubt that outlook from these windows would be reduced. However, bearing in mind the length and position of the planned upper level new build, the principal front and rear outlooks available from the flats, and the specific uses of the rooms served by the relevant windows I would deem any impact to not be of sufficient scale to prevent planning permission in this instance.
7. However, I am concerned about the bulk, scale and future use of the new elevated sea-view upper-level development prominently lying immediately alongside the presently diminutive scale of the adjoining bungalow (No 138) and its small outside amenity area. To my mind with such an uneven distribution of development anyone using the outside space at No 138 would have a very uncomfortable sense of being dominated by development, glazing and, potentially, outdoor upper-level activity. In this immediate context the scale and proximity of an intrusive built form would be unacceptably unsettling.
8. LP Policy CS16 also seeks to ensure that development does not have any undue adverse impact on the amenity of neighbours. I conclude that the appeal scheme would conflict with this and it would also run contrary to the parallel objectives within the SPD.

Other matters

9. I understand the wish to extend this dwelling, not least with the sea view aspect. I recognise that the Appellants have sought, through adjustment, to over-come a previous refusal of planning permission (APP/21/00710) however, regrettably, I nevertheless deem that flaws remain within this proposal. I do agree that balconies are commonly found locally and that relationships to neighbouring properties from these do vary, but in this instance the balcony is a part of a whole upper-level change to the rear which in total would be excessively overbearing. Having carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellants I conclude that the matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issues identified above.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework has been considered and the development plan policy and SPD which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality as well as on living conditions for neighbours. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond
INSPECTOR