



Appeal Decision

by Richard James Bsc (Hons) Msc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 19/01/2024

Appeal reference: CAS-03054-R6B2K4

Site address: 81 Cefn Hengoed Road, Winch Wen, Swansea, SA1 7LQ

- 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 Ms Lindsay Day against the decision of the City and County of Swansea Council.
 - The application Ref 2023/1329/FUL, dated 28 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
 - A site visit was made on 8 December 2023.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a two-storey semi-detached dwelling fronting onto Cefn Hengoed Road, with a slightly angled orientation to the highway. Its front parking and garden areas project into and narrow the highway's width. A side driveway leads to a detached garage to the rear. The adjoining dwelling, 83 Cefn Hengoed Road (No. 83), has a similarly mirrored frontage design and is also set in from its side boundary, albeit with a narrower gap. These features provide a pleasing visual symmetry to the pair of dwellings, despite their modest architectural merit.
4. The appeal site's immediate street scene has a mix of dwelling forms and appearances, followed by predominantly detached bungalows to the south west and two-storey semi-detached dwellings to the north east. The appeal site and No. 83's forward projection and angled orientation starkly contrasts with the largely consistent building lines and orientations of neighbouring dwellings.
5. Policy PS 2 of the adopted Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP), amongst other matters, requires development to respond positively to aspects of local context and character that contribute towards a sense of place. In support of LDP policy, the adopted 'Placemaking Guidance for Householder Development' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) advises that amongst other matters, side extensions should not upset the form and balance of the original front elevation and as a guide, they should be no greater than one half the frontage width of the original house.

6. The appellant contends that any side extension could be perceived to unbalance a pair of dwellings. However, as the SPG acknowledges, each case must be determined on its individual merits. Although the SPG provides guidance only and is not prescriptive, it supports the Council's placemaking objectives as articulated in Policy PS 2 and has been subject to public consultation prior to formal adoption. I therefore attach considerable weight to the design objectives of the SPG in this respect.
7. The proposal would be set below the host dwelling's front ridgeline and set back from its principal elevation, with matching materials and some matching fenestration designs. The proposal would broadly accord with the design guidance of the SPG in these respects. However, it would nearly double the existing width of the dwelling and would occupy the majority of the available plot width. The proposal, by extending over the side driveway up to the side boundary wall, would significantly elongate and visually compete with the existing dwelling's principal elevation, rather than being visually subservient to it. In doing so, it would also substantially erode the clear spacing from the dwelling's side boundary. Consequently, the proposal would have an overly expansive appearance that would harm the form and symmetry of the existing dwelling.
8. The proposal would also unbalance the frontage appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings to an unacceptable level. Due to the properties' position, these effects would be clearly visible at this visually prominent location within the street scene. The proposed undercroft parking design would retain vehicular access through to the garage. Whilst not in itself a visually harmful feature within the varied immediate street scene context, it would nonetheless be an integral part of the proposal's elongated form. Subject to a condition to secure details, the appellant's suggestion of including a garage door would likely exacerbate this harm by closing the void, thereby amplifying the excessive width proposed.
9. The appellant has provided numerous examples of Council approved side extensions to other properties, that extend beyond half the width of the original dwelling. Based on the illustrations provided and references to Council officer reports, the levels of exceedance appear to be marginal. None of the proposals appear to compete visually with the original form of the host dwelling, thereby retaining visual subservience. Notwithstanding their different locations elsewhere in Swansea to the appeal site, in this respect these examples are materially different to the proposal before me and do not set any precedent for decision making. I therefore give them little weight in my decision.
10. I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the requirements of LDP Policy PS 2 and the design objectives of the SPG.

Other Matters

11. In reaching my decision, I acknowledge that the proposal seeks to create additional living space for the appellant's family. However, there is little evidence that the appeal proposal is the only realistic means of securing the identified benefits, and the harm I have identified would be significant. Consequently, it would be proportionate to withhold planning permission in the circumstances.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.
13. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is

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in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

Richard James

INSPECTOR