



The Planning Inspectorate

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HD1

Team 3

13/95

Mr J Smith
350 Northridge Way
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
Herts
HP1 2AB

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

T/APP/A1910/A/95/248625/P8

Date:

5 JUN 1995		PLANNING DEPARTMENT DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL	
Ref	10	File	
Received		06 JUN 1995	
Comments			

Dear Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6
APPLICATION NO:- 4/1335/94

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine your appeal against the decision of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse planning permission for a two-storey side extension to 350 Northridge Way, Hemel Hempstead. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council and I inspected the site on 16 May 1995.
2. From the evidence before me and what I saw of the site and its surroundings during my visit, I consider that the main issues in your appeal are, first, the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area and, second, whether adequate car parking space can be provided without unacceptable harm to the appearance of the area.
3. The policy basis for the Council's refusal of planning permission is Policy 8 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan; at the time of the decision, this plan was still at draft stage but it has since been adopted (in April 1995). Policy 8 is a general provision aimed at securing high quality in development proposals.
4. No 350 Northridge Way is one of a pair semi-detached dwellings of which there are some nine pairs on three sides of an open, grassed square; Northridge Way constitutes the fourth side to the square and on the other side of that road lies Northridge Park. Its open nature and its trees make this an attractive area. The pairs of houses along each side of the square are linked to each other by side passages and garages, presenting an unbroken line, but at first floor level there are gaps between the pairs over the side passages and garages, affording views of trees beyond through which the roofs of more distant houses may be glimpsed. These gaps and the views beyond make a notable contribution to the attractive appearance of the area.
5. The measurements taken during my site visit indicate that the gap between Nos 348 and 350 is about 7.3 metres now and would be reduced to some 4.6 metres if the proposed

extension were built. It seems to me that a reduction of that order would markedly curtail the view through the gap and reduce the impression of openness which is such an attractive feature of the square. Although every case must be decided on its merits, it is necessary to consider also the precedent effect of allowing your extension. There are two main gaps in the row of houses on the eastern - and because it faces the main road, the most important - side of the square, the one between your house and No 348 and that between Nos 344 and 346. If your proposal were accepted it would be difficult for the Council to resist others, especially if the circumstances of a new proposal were very close to yours. That would be the case if the owner of No 344 were to apply for permission; if it were granted, both of the major gaps would be roughly halved in width, to the great detriment of the character and appearance of the area.

6. Considering the impact of the proposed extension on the appearance of your house, I am inclined to agree with you that there would be some enhancement. The extension is quite attractive and it would bring Nos 350 back into harmony with its attached neighbour, No 352, which has already been extended to the same design. Nonetheless, I think any such benefit would be outweighed by the harm that would be done by the narrowing of the gap between dwellings. On the first issue in this appeal, I thus conclude that the proposed extension would be so detrimental to the character and appearance of the area that it would be in conflict with Policy 8 of the Local Plan and should not be permitted.

7. Turning to the car parking issue, the Local Plan requires that a minimum of three parking spaces be provided for dwellings with four bedrooms, whereas you have only two. The fact that you own only one car now is not really relevant since your house might in future be occupied by people owning more. The minor road serving the dwellings is a little over 4 metres wide, with a footpath about 1.5 metres wide. At the time of my visit, when, presumably, a lot of cars were away on work use, there was nonetheless some on-street parking and, because of the risk of obstruction, most cars were half on the footpath. In a couple of cases a car had been parked on garden space across the front of dwellings, to the detriment of their appearance: parking nose-on to the dwelling is a lot less unsightly. The submitted plan indicates that there would be rather more than 4.5 metres from the southern edge of the front door to the southern boundary. The Council's standards require a car parking space to be 2.4 metres wide and it seems to me that two cars could be parked on that area without unreasonably obstructing access or impairing views from living room windows or being unacceptably unsightly. These considerations lead me to conclude, on the second, parking, issue that a further on-street parking space could be provided without causing unacceptable harm to the appearance of the area.

8. In summary, I accept the Council's arguments about the harm that narrowing the gap between dwellings would cause, but not their car parking objection. In reaching these conclusions, I have taken into account all the other matters in the evidence before me. In particular, I have had regard to the fact that extensions have been allowed in the past to several dwellings in the vicinity of yours. However, most were approved before present policy existed and, because of their location, none has had the harmful effect that I believe yours would have.

9. For the above reasons and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss your appeal.

Yours faithfully

... 07/50

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'P M Hewitt', written over a horizontal line.

P M HEWITT OBE MA (Oxon)
Inspector

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL



Application Ref No. 4/1335/94

J Smith
350 Northridge Way
Hemel Hempstead
Herts

DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION
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350 Northridge Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts

TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION

Your application for *full planning permission (householder)* dated 10.10.1994 and received on 14.10.1994 has been **REFUSED**, for the reasons set out on the attached sheet(s).

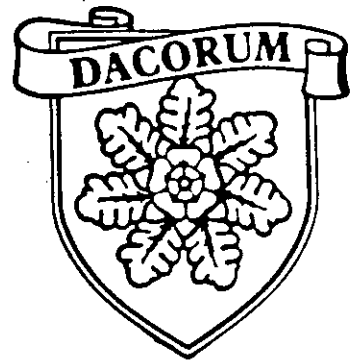
Director of Planning

Date of Decision: 08.12.1994

(ENC Reasons and Notes)

REASONS FOR REFUSAL
OF APPLICATION: 4/1335/94

Date of Decision: 08.12.1994



Policies of the Development Plan aim to safeguard the residential character of the Borough and ensure that there is adequate parking provision. To this effect Policy 8 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan Deposit Draft & Proposed and Further Modifications specifies that development will not be permitted if it fails to satisfy a range of criteria. Of those listed, it is expected that new development will harmonise with the general character of the area, avoid visual harm and provide adequate parking. No. 350 occupies a prominent position in relation to the cul-de-sac in which it is located. The gap between the southern flank wall of No. 350 and the northern flank wall of No. 348 Northridge Way provides an important feature within the street scene. The proposal, by reason of its position and size, will reduce this gap, to the detriment of the appearance of this important part of the street scene. In the opinion of the local planning authority there should be no reduction in the existing space between the southern flank wall of the first floor of No. 350 Northridge Way and the northern flank wall of the first floor of No. 348 Northridge Way, in the interests of permanently maintaining the spacious appearance of this part of the cul-de-sac which is also reinforced in the relationship between Nos. 344 and 346 Northridge Way. In addition the enlarged dwellinghouse will not be served by adequate parking provision, and such provision could only be made within the front garden area of the dwelling, which itself would be harmful to visual amenity.