
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2016

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 22 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/16/3154019

11 Park Lane, Charvil, Wokingham RG10 9TR

- 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 and Mrs J Morgan against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 160778, dated 22 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is front and rear extension to the existing house, to create additional living space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council advises that following receipt of a bat survey report it no longer wishes to defend the third refusal reason. I have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are:
 - a) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - b) the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 12 Park Lane, with particular reference to outlook, daylight and sunlight.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The northernmost section of Park Lane is residential in character, comprising two-storey houses and a short row of three detached bungalows at the end nearest Charvil Village Hall. The appeal property is centrally positioned within the latter row. Although non-identical, these bungalows are similar in scale, form and architectural style. There is a pleasing rhythm to their pyramidal roofs which step down to follow the gradient of the road. The simple roofs are important in maintaining the harmony of these bungalows as a group, notwithstanding their minority status within the street as a whole.
 5. The proposal is to extend the bungalow to the front and rear and to raise the roof by approximately 1.5 metres to create additional living space. The front
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extension would be of limited depth and the extended property would still respect the building line along this side of the street. More noticeable would be the substantial increase in scale and bulk which would be brought about by the proposed roof alterations. The diminutive roof of this modest bungalow would be replaced with a much larger structure with taller eaves, greater overall height and half hipped gables at either end. In my opinion, the resultant appearance would be discordant with the bungalows on either side and at odds with the common characteristics of the group.

6. It is argued that, in accordance with relevant advice in the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012) (SPD), the proposal should be assessed in the wider context of houses which are substantially taller and more varied in design. However, vegetation in front gardens means that the bungalows are not generally visible at a distance. The most significant public vantage points are closer, from where No 11 and its flanking neighbours are appreciated together as a discrete group.
7. Although it is suggested that the properties are screened by planting, I saw that there are clear views from the street. Existing vegetation would therefore be ineffective in mitigating the harmful impacts identified above.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be materially harmful to the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010) (CS). This policy seeks high quality design and development which, amongst other things, is of an appropriate mass, built form and height to the area.
9. Policy CC03 of the Wokingham Borough Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) is also cited on the decision notice. However, it seems to me that the policy is not directly relevant to this particular issue.

Living conditions

10. The proposed 1½ storey rear extension would project beyond the back wall of the host dwelling by approximately 4 metres. Ground level differences mean that the eaves height would be slightly above 3 metres when measured from the garden of No 12. The appellants argue that these dimensions would follow advice set out in the SPD.
11. I agree that there are aspects of the proposal which would accord with the guidance. However, the SPD also states that maximum eaves and ridge height should be no more than those of the existing property. The proposal would not adhere to this stipulation, with the eaves and ridge being significantly taller than existing. In my judgement, the extension would be overbearing for the occupiers of No 12 due to the combined effects of its height, roof mass and proximity to the boundary.
12. The Council has also raised the concern that there would be loss of light for the occupiers of No 12. However, it seems to me that any impact on daylight is unlikely to be materially harmful. Moreover, the position of the appeal site in relation to the path of the sun means that there would be no reduction in sunlight reaching the adjoining property's garden or windows.
13. Even though there have been no objections on amenity grounds from the affected neighbours, I conclude that the extension would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the living conditions of the residents of No 12. As such, the

scheme would conflict with Policy CP3 of the CS insofar as it seeks to ensure that development is not detrimental to the quality of life of adjoining occupiers.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR