The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2016

by Jonathan Manning BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/16/3157726
32 Cotterell Gardens, Twyford, Reading, RG10 0XP

- 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 Mrs Danielle Sherwin-Brown against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
- The application Ref 161791, dated 30 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 August 2016.
- The development proposed is conversion of existing loft space to additional habitable accommodation to include part hip to gable with rear dormer extension and front roof light.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue of the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on Cotterell Gardens and currently accommodates a semi-detached two storey property. The area is largely residential and the site adjoins an area of open space that lies to the east. Due to the orientation and siting of the appeal property, I observed that its rear elevation is highly visible from the area of open space.

4. The proposal would include a large rear dormer window. The Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012) (the Design Guide SPD) advises on design matters and sets out that its purpose is to enhance the design of development and make sure that proposals are of the highest quality design. There is no reason before me to afford anything other than significant weight to guidance set out within the Design Guide SPD. Section 4.11 sets out that '*Dormer windows should generally be positioned within the main roof, by being set back from both eaves line and the sides of the roof*'.

5. The proposed dormer window would be of a significant scale and would accommodate a substantial area of the roof. It would be set very close to the ridge line and eaves and would span most of the appeal property's width. I consider that due to the proposed dormer window's scale and bulk that it would be an overly prominent feature that would, in my view, dominate the rear

elevation of the property. This would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

6. In addition, it was evident that dormer windows are not a common feature in the area. The proposal would therefore result in an incongruous feature, which along with its scale and bulk would draw undue attention to itself. I cannot agree with the appellant that it would not be in a highly visible location. Views of the appeal property's rear elevation are freely available from the park.

7. I acknowledge that efforts have been made to reduce the visibility of the dormer window from within the street. However, this does not overcome my above concerns. Further, I acknowledge the appellant's view that the Council's planning officer did not consider the dormer window to be overly dominant in both the withdrawn application and the planning application subject to this appeal. However, I must look at the proposal from a fresh and on its own individual merits. Further, I am mindful that the planning application was refused on the basis that the rear dormer window would be overly prominent and incongruous.

8. In conclusion, I consider that the proposed dormer window by virtue of its scale and bulk would result in an overly dominant and incongruous feature, in a highly visible location, that would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. The proposal therefore runs contrary to Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2010). The policy seeks to ensure that development is appropriate in terms of scale, mass, built form, height, materials and character of the area, together with being of high quality design. The proposal also conflicts with the guidance provided by the Design Guide SPD. I also consider that the proposal runs contrary to Section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to deliver good design.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, there are no material considerations that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Jonathan Manning

INSPECTOR