

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2016

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/16/3161148

21 Turnbridge Close, Lower Earley, Reading, RG6 4UZ

- 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 Nitesh Mistry against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 161039, dated 15 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is single storey front, first floor side and single storey rear extensions.
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Decision

1. The Appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The first main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character of the area. The second main issue is whether sufficient on-site parking is provided to meet the likely demand for parking spaces resulting from the occupation of the extended dwelling.

Reasons

Character

3. The Appeal property is located within a modern housing estate which comprises a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses which are similar in design and constructed from a limited palette of materials. Whilst the gaps between dwellings are small, many of the dwellings are separated by single storey wings to the side, which are set back from the main front building line of the dwellings. This together with the soft planting within the front gardens and the predominance of boundary hedges contributes to the spacious suburban character and appearance of the area.
 4. The existing dwelling on the Appeal site occupies a prominent position mid way along Turnbridge Close and in close proximity to the junction with Pasture Close. The dwelling has a gap above the single storey side wing which is consistent with the prevailing pattern of development within the immediate area. It provides a sense of separation between the Appeal dwelling and the dwelling at 22 Turnbridge Close (No.22), which have similar front and rear building lines.
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5. Together, policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2010 (CS) and the Wokingham Borough Design Guide (DG) seek to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. New development should be of an appropriate built scale and should contribute to the sense of place. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) similarly requires new development to respond to local character, reflect the identity of local surroundings and to add to the overall quality of the area.
6. The ground floor front elevation of the proposed extension would project almost up to the main front building line of the host dwelling and the first floor element would be recessed by approximately 0.9 metres. Its fully hipped roof would be lower than that of the host dwelling and the rear element of the extension would be single storey with a mono-pitched roof. Provided it was constructed from matching external materials the proposed extension would be subservient to and would respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
7. However, the proposed extension would project up to the side boundary of the site and the eaves of the extension would project across the side boundary with No.22. This would result in a narrow two storey gap between the two properties. As a consequence the relationship between the two properties would appear uncharacteristically cramped and would fail to respect the spatial characteristics of the area. Whilst the existing first floor side window at No.22 only serves a bathroom, the existence of this window would serve to highlight the cramped relationship between the proposed extension and the dwelling at No.22.
8. In wider views along Turnbridge Close the proposed extension would have a terracing effect, which would have an urbanising impact on the street scene. Whilst it is noted that there have been several two storey side extensions within the estate none are directly comparable to the Appeal scheme. In particular none are located so close to adjacent dwellings with similar front and rear building lines. As such, rather than set a precedent they serve to highlight the need to assess each proposal on its individual merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies.
9. Overall, the visual harm that would be caused by the proposed extension would outweigh the benefits for the Appellant and his family that would result from the additional accommodation. This harm is not something that could be satisfactorily dealt with by conditions.
10. I conclude on the first main issue that the proposed extension would materially and unacceptably harm the character of the area, contrary to policies CP1 and CP3 of the CS, the DG and the NPPF.

Parking

11. Together policy CP6 of the CS and policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 (MDD) require the provision of appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership and the parking standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD.
12. Whilst no parking layout was submitted, it was clear from the Appeal site visit, that the resultant driveway to the front of the dwelling would be suitable for

the parking of two cars. This is provided the garage was fitted with a roller shutter door. In requesting the provision of three on-site parking spaces the Council's highways department commented that this provision could include the proposed resultant garage. Despite its modest size the resultant garage could be used for the parking of a small car or motorcycle. Both the fitting of the garage with roller doors and its availability for vehicle parking are matters that could be dealt with by the imposition of conditions.

13. In addition, all the dwellings in the vicinity of the Appeal site appear to benefit from off-street parking and on-street parking is unrestricted within Turnbridge Close. At the time of the Appeal site visit no cars were parked within the highway, although the demand for parking spaces is likely to be materially higher during the evenings and at weekends.
14. For these reasons I conclude on the second main issue that sufficient space would be available on the Appeal site for the parking of up to three cars and that the proposed extension would not place undue pressure on the demand for on and off street parking spaces in the locality. The proposal therefore complies with policy CP6 of the CS and policy CC07 of the MDD.

Conclusion

15. Whilst I have found in favour of the Appellant in relation to the second main issue, the conclusion on the first main issue amounts to a compelling reason for dismissing this Appeal. The harm that would be caused to the character, appearance and identity of the locality would outweigh the benefits for the Appellant and his family that would result from the proposed extension.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR