

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2016

by M Brookes BA MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/D/16/3161480

18 Aylesbury Crescent, Slough, Buckinghamshire, SL1 3ES

- 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 I Singh against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. P/13628/002, dated 19 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side and rear extension at 18 Aylesbury Crescent, Slough, Buckinghamshire, SL1 3ES in accordance with the application Ref. P/13628/002, dated 19 April 2016 subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 01A and 02A.
 3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Development in Aylesbury Crescent comprises two storey terraced houses of similar designs with hipped ends to their roofs. The terraces are set back from the road beyond small front gardens of similar depth. There are gaps between the individual terraces, but these gaps lack uniformity. This is particularly apparent where the road curves and the different alignment of adjacent terraces results in particularly wide gaps between front elevations. Similarly there are terraces that abut or are close to side curtilage boundaries and others that are well away.
 4. Core Policy 8 of The Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006-2026 (CS) requires all development to be of high quality design that respects its location and surroundings, and reflects the street scene and the local
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distinctiveness of the area. Similar provisions relating to the need for extensions to be compatible with and/or improve their surroundings are contained in saved Policies H15 and EN1 of The Local Plan for Slough (2004) (LP). LP Policy EN2 also requires extensions to be compatible with the original building in terms of its scale, form and other features.

5. More detailed guidance is contained in the Council's Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document 2010 (SPD). This states (para 5.2) that when assessing two storey/first floor side extensions the primary considerations will be the character of the locality, the space around the building and site considerations. Paragraph 5.3 however states that in order to maintain a visual gap between buildings, thereby reducing the 'terracing' effect on the street scene, two storey/first floor side extensions should be set off the side boundary by at least one metre.
6. The Council's objection to the side extension is that it would appear an overly dominant and discordant feature when viewed in the context of the existing building by reason of the lack of a one metre offset from the adjoining boundary in accordance with SPD paragraph 5.3.
7. However, I am not satisfied this reflects a sustainable analysis of the primary considerations in paragraph 5.2 and of the reason why a one metre gap is stipulated in the SPD. The extension would project to the side boundary of the site, but the size of gaps between terraces and side boundaries in Aylesbury Crescent is very varied. In any case, it is clear from the SPD that the real reason for the one metre gap is to keep buildings apart. In this case, there would remain a very substantial gap between the appeal property and the end of the adjacent angled terrace at 20 Aylesbury Crescent. Furthermore, because of the size of the residual gap (substantially in excess of 2 metres allowed for in the SPD), even a quite substantial extension of that adjacent property could take place in addition to the appeal proposal without causing a terracing effect.
8. Because of its limited width, recessed front elevation above ground floor level and lower roofline, the side extension would be appropriately subservient and would not appear a dominant or discordant addition to the appeal property or feature of the street scene.
9. The SPD also states (EX26) that two storey and first floor rear extensions should be subordinate to the original dwelling. The Council's objection is that the proposed rear extension would be an overly dominant and discordant feature because of its scale, bulk and massing.
10. The side extension would project beyond the line of the rear wall of the existing property where it would form part of a wider rear extension. The overall width of this rear extension would therefore be almost the same as that of the existing house. However, more than half of the original rear wall at first floor level and most of the original rear roof slope would remain. The rear wing as a whole would have a lower and more subordinate roof and would not appear as an overly large, bulky or massive element of the extended property or of the terrace of which it forms part. Furthermore, it would restore some balance to the rear elevation of the terrace, which includes a two storey extension of similar scale at its other end at 12 Aylesbury Crescent. The rear elevation would also be scarcely visible from the public domain so the scale, bulk and massing of the rear extension would have no material effect on the street scene.

11. In summary, the proposed development would not have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character or appearance of the appeal property or the surrounding area. It would accord with CS and LP policies in being of high quality design that respects its location and surroundings, reflects the street scene and the local distinctiveness of the area and would be compatible in terms of scale, form and other features of the original building. It would also not conflict with the development plan when read as a whole or with the core principle in the National Planning Policy Framework that planning should always seek to secure high quality design.

Conditions

12. The Council has suggested a number of conditions with which I agree. In addition to the statutory commencement condition, a condition requiring compliance with the approved plans is necessary to provide certainty. A condition requiring the external materials to match those on the existing building is also necessary to safeguard the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

M Brookes

INSPECTOR