
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2016

by G D Jones BSc(Hons) DipTP DMS MRTPI

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

Decision date: 08 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/16/3154250

8 Budes Cottages, Keephatch Road, Wokingham RG40 5PY

- 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 C Robertson against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
- The application Ref 152374, dated 25 August 2015, was refused by notice dated 14 April 2016.
- The development proposed is a new dwelling on land adjacent to 8 Budes Cottages with new parking area provided to the retained dwelling.

This decision is issued in accordance with section 56 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended and supersedes that issued on 28 November 2016.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the appeal development's effect on the character and appearance of the area, on the living conditions of the occupants of 6 Budes Cottages with particular regard to privacy and those of 8 Budes Cottages with regard to garden space, and whether the appeal development would secure acceptable living conditions for occupants of the proposed dwelling in respect to garden space.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Budes Cottages is a fairly narrow private residential street, which is a no-through road. It has a strong character and appearance typified by short rows of cottages of comparable scale and design positioned on similar alignments to its south and around its head. Its limited length, mature planting, self-contained nature and linear, clustered built form give it an attractive intimate feel that contrasts with the surrounding pattern of development.
4. The appeal site is located towards the head of Budes Cottages and forms part of the side garden to No 8. While it is not especially prominent, views are available from the street into the site to where the proposed building would stand. Although it is a private no-through road, the site would nonetheless be viewed by visitors to the nearby properties as well as by residents of the street.

5. The proposed development would adopt many of the attractive features of the neighbouring houses and follow a similar alignment to No 8 and the adjoining house No 7. However, extending the principal built form of the street so far southward would be at odds with the clustered linear pattern of development which helps give Budes Cottages its strong character. While an existing garage within the site, which is proposed to be retained, is in a southerly position, given its limited scale and corner position, it has a very limited influence on the street scene.
6. The proposed house would also be detached, thereby resulting in a markedly more narrow profile than the existing buildings in the street. This too would be visually jarring. Consequently, for all of the foregoing reasons, while not particularly prominent, the proposed development would have a detrimental influence on the character and appearance of Budes Cottages.
7. The proposed development would, therefore, have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it conflicts in this regard with Policies CP1 (sustainable development) and CP3 (general principles for development) of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy January 2010 (the Core Strategy) and Policy TB06 (development of private residential gardens) of the Wokingham Borough Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan February 2014 (the Local Plan) and with the Borough Design Guide SPD June 2012 (the BDG).

Living Conditions

8. The front elevation of the proposed house would be oriented such that it would face towards the rear garden of 6 Budes Cottages. It would stand some 19 metres from the rear elevation of No 6 compared to the minimum back to back distance of 22 metres as indicated in the BDG. However this would not be a back to back relationship but rather front to back. Additionally, the two houses would not directly face each other and would be set at a significant angle. Given these circumstances and the separation distance concerned, along with the existing boundary treatment and intervening mature planting, which could be supplemented, I am not persuaded that the proposed development would have a significant effect on the living conditions of No 6 in any regard.
9. However, the development would leave No 8 with a significantly reduced curtilage and private garden space. The proposed dwelling would have a comparably small rear garden. The evidence indicates that the overall proposed garden areas of the two properties would meet the standard set out in the BDG. Nonetheless, the depth of both gardens would fall well below the 11 metres recommended in the BDG and would also be reasonably narrow. Consequently, both properties would have confined private amenity space, disproportionately constrained for dwellings of this scale. These circumstances would have a significantly harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupants of 8 Budes Cottages and fail to secure acceptable living conditions for those of the proposed dwelling.
10. Therefore, while the effect of the proposed development on the occupants of No 6 would be limited, overall it would create unacceptable living conditions particularly for the occupants of No 8 and those of the proposed dwelling. Consequently, the appeal scheme conflicts in this regard with Core Strategy

Policies CP1 and CP3 and Local Plan Policy TB06 and with the BDG and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

11. Neighbouring residents have expressed other concerns regarding the effect of the development. However, these have not altered my overall conclusion.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G D Jones

INSPECTOR