

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 April 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/16/3167699

72 Courtenay Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 5HQ

- 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 Parveen Hussain against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. PLAN/2016/0893, dated 26 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is extensions to the side and rear of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings, and (ii) the adequacy of the living conditions as regards outlook for the existing and future occupiers of the dwelling.

Reasons

3. On the first issue I saw on my visit that the appeal dwelling forms one half of a symmetrical pair with No. 70 and that this pair are one of four of the same design in this part of Courtenay Road.
 4. The balance of each pair formed by the symmetry of the houses makes a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of the dwellings and Courtenay Road, whilst the four pairs when read together establish a similarly positive and pleasing rhythm to the road.
 5. A number of the properties including Nos. 70 and 74 on either side of the appeal dwelling have had substantial single storey rear extensions, but because of their single storey form and rearward position these have not had any impact on the street scene. The exception is No. 62, which has had a two storey rear extension, but because of its position at the end of the row and with a flank to Delta Road this is much less constrained in terms the opportunity to extend.
 6. In the light of these points I consider that the two storey side extension, although only of a modest width, would have a harmful effect on the symmetry and balance of Nos. 70 and 72 as a pair, and as a consequence through the reduction of space to the boundary also the rhythm of the street. Moreover, as
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the Council points out, if this aspect of the proposal were to be approved it would be difficult for the Council to resist similar proposals. These would cumulatively offset the spatial benefits to the character and appearance of the road that the row of semi-detached properties comprising Nos. 62 to 76 currently provides. At present, these significantly offset the appearance of the more cramped and tightly knit terraced dwellings on the opposite side of the road.

7. At the rear of the property, the proposed extension forming both part two storey and part single storey additions would be too large and with too complex a roof to be satisfactorily accommodated within the limited area of space to the rear of one half of pair of semi-detached dwellings and also close to No. 74. If approved it would not be in keeping with the simple hipped roof design of the building, and to the extent that it could be seen in public and private views it could also reasonably be perceived as an excessively large and unsympathetic addition to the original dwelling. In this context I have already referred to the comparison with the extension at No. 62 and the difference that the position of that dwelling makes to its enlargement.
8. Turning briefly to the second issue, the proposed bedroom 5 would be very small and without a proper outlook, given the need to partially obscure glaze the window to safeguard the privacy of the neighbours. However, whilst I accept the Council's point as to the inadequacy of living conditions, this layout could be achieved by subdivision at a later date without the need for permission. In any event, the room would be part of a much larger area of living accommodation in the extended house. I do not therefore regard this matter, although technically a drawback of the scheme, to be a sufficient basis in itself for the appeal to be rejected.
9. However, this does not alter my conclusion on the other issue that extensions of the form and scale currently proposed would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings. This would be in conflict with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012; Saved Policy HSG23 of the Woking Borough Local Plan 2008; the Council's Design Supplementary Planning Documents of 2008 & 2015, and Section 7: 'Requiring Good Design' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
10. I have carefully read the grounds of appeal and noted in particular the needs of the family and the special circumstances of this case. However as I understand the position, it is not the Council's case that the dwelling cannot have extensions that would allow substantially more living space; rather that it is the form and scale of this particular scheme that would be harmful. Accordingly, whilst I have considerable sympathy with the appellant's need for the proposal I am not convinced either that this scheme is the only solution to the problem of inadequate living area or that it outweighs the significant harm arising on the first main issue.
11. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR