

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2017

by C Jack BSc(Hons) MA MA(TP) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/17/3170562

1 Kibblewhite Crescent, Twyford RG10 9AX

- 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 M Hurst of Hurst Development Solutions Ltd against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 163143, dated 10 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of an attached 3-bed dwelling following removal of garage and outbuildings on land adjacent 1 Kibblewhite Crescent.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has provided amended plans with the appeal which principally show a reduction in the extent of the rear projection of the proposed house beyond the rear elevation of the host property, 1 Kibblewhite Crescent (No 1), and cycle storage provided to both dwellings. The Council was previously provided with the amended plans however, it determined the application on the basis of the originally submitted plans because it did not consider that the amendments would overcome its concerns in relation to the character and appearance of the area.
3. The overall scale and nature of the development shown in the amended plans is not materially changed from that shown in the drawings upon which the Council based its decision and I am therefore satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by my consideration of them. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of amended plans 3417-200B; 3417-201A; 3417-202A; 3417-203A; 3417-204A and 3417-205A. The Council has confirmed that the amended plans overcome its second reason for refusal, which relates to the living conditions of adjoining occupiers, with particular regard to outlook. On the basis of the evidence before me, and the modest extent of rearward projection proposed, I see no significant reasons to conclude otherwise.

Main Issues

4. In light of the background above, I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.
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Reasons

5. No 1 is a semi-detached house situated in a predominantly residential area, with facilities including local shops, a school and a recreation ground nearby. Residential built form in the vicinity is generally mixed, with a variety of detached and semi-detached houses, including some bungalows. The prevailing pattern of development in Kibblewhite Crescent is pairs of semi-detached houses of generally similar original design and roughly uniform spacing, albeit the building line is moderately staggered along both sides of the road. A variety of extensions and alterations to the houses here is apparent. Front gardens are generally open and this fairly open character extends into Longfield Road, where it is partly derived from the width of the road, but the openness is particularly apparent on both corners where Kibblewhite Crescent meets Longfield Road, where there are visually open grassed areas.
6. It is proposed to remove the existing side garage to No 1 and construct an attached 3 bedroom house. The new house, which would be of a design and materials generally in keeping with the host property, would result in the existing semi-detached pair becoming a terrace of three dwellings. As such, the development would be at odds with the prevailing character and pattern of built form in Kibblewhite Crescent, where there are no other terraced dwellings. The main adverse effect of this would be to extend two-storey built form into the relatively open area at the side of No 1, where there is currently only single-storey development. This effect would be exacerbated by the provision of additional parking at the front of the site, including the area which is currently grassed and visually open albeit it does not form public open space.
7. While the proposed building line to Longfield Road would not be significantly different from other properties nearby, the site is open to clear public view and is therefore very prominent visual terms. A key difference is that other properties nearby present a front elevation to Longfield Road, whereas the proposal would present a largely featureless flank elevation to that road. This too would be generally out of keeping with the prevailing pattern of development in the vicinity. While the mixed residential character of the area limits its sensitivity to change to some degree, the proposal would nonetheless significantly alter the character and appearance of the site, particularly in terms of the perceived open nature of the immediate vicinity such that, on balance, harm would arise to the street scene from the relatively prominent siting of the new house and the introduction of a terraced form of development here.
8. I note the appellant's submissions that there are other terraced houses in the local area, including at 1 and 3 Longfield Road and at Pennfields. I noted these during my visit but they are some distance from the appeal site where the general character includes a significant proportion of terraced houses, and they would not be read in the street scene with the proposed development. I also noted the extension to 2 Cheriton Avenue, which is a side residential extension to the existing bungalow, rather than a new independent dwelling. Accordingly, these other developments do not add significant weight in favour of the appeal proposal, which I have considered on its own merits.
9. I also note that an area of garden would be retained at the side and that the fence line would be maintained in its current position. I have also considered the potential for a landscaping scheme, such as providing trees along the road side, to soften the development. However, these factors do not address my

concerns in relation to the scale and siting of the proposed end of terrace dwelling, particularly in regard to the established character of the vicinity. The proposal would be generally inconsistent with the Council's Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012 (SPD), which among other things seeks to ensure that new housing responds to its context, responds to corner positions, and relates well to or enhances existing street scenes. While elements of the SPD relate primarily to the design of residential estates, the principles are generally transferable to smaller schemes.

10. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposed development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. It would be inconsistent with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy 2010, which among other things respectively seek to ensure that development would maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, and would be of an appropriate layout, built form and character to the area. The Council has also referred to Policy TB21 of the adopted Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014. While I have had regard to this policy, it relates specifically to landscape character and therefore has not been determinative in this appeal, which relates to a built up area.

Other Matters

11. I saw that No 2 Kibblewhite Crescent has a two storey side extension that abuts the common boundary with No 3. The appellant contends that if a similar extension was carried out at No 3 a terraced effect would result. I am not persuaded that in granting planning permission for the extension to No 2 the Council set a precedent for the same development at No 3, including because each case falls to be considered on its own merits. Moreover, there is no evidence before me that similar extensions at No 3 or elsewhere in the road are particularly likely to happen. Even if they did, residential side extensions between dwellings would not weigh significantly in favour of the appeal, which relates to a new independent dwelling on a corner plot.
12. There is no significant evidence before me to indicate that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing supply, as is required by paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Accordingly, relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered out of date. Furthermore, I have identified conflict with the development plan, as set out above. The presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 14 of the Framework therefore is not engaged in this case. Nevertheless, I have considered the various benefits that the development might bring, including adding to the local mix of dwellings, providing a family home in a generally accessible location, and benefits to the local economy both during and after construction. I have afforded a little weight to these benefits, however, they would be modest in relation to the provision of one dwelling, and therefore do not outweigh the conflict with the development plan that I have identified.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Catherine Jack

INSPECTOR