
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 July 2017

by I Radcliffe BSc(Hons) MRTPI MCIEH DMS

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

Decision date: 21 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/17/3168695
14 Aldenham Terrace, Bracknell RG12 7PR

- 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 Miroslav Lehocky against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00558/FUL, dated 3 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a playhouse on top of a garden shed.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The proposed playhouse has already been erected on top of the garden shed. The main issues in this appeal therefore are;
 - the effect of the playhouse on the character and appearance of the area; and,
 - its effect on the living conditions of neighbours with regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Aldenham Terrace forms part of a housing estate characterised by modest terraced dwellings. Front gardens, use of greens and gaps between terraces that allow the openness of rear gardens and trees within them to contribute to the streetscene are all features that have helped create an attractive residential environment. In private views from the rear of the terraces, the openness of the gardens and mature trees are features that also contribute to the quality of the environment.
4. The shed and playhouse form a two storey outbuilding that is located in the north western corner of the back garden. In public views from the street, owing to its elevated height of 4.3m and dimensions (2.4m in width and 3m in length), the playhouse occupies most of the gap between No 14 and the terrace at Blackmeadows. As a result, it is a prominent and incongruous feature that obstructs the contribution that trees within the rear garden make to the streetscene. In closer private views from the rear of nearby houses and their back gardens along Aldenham Terrace and Blackmeadows, the building is more starkly prominent and at odds with its surroundings. All in all, it is a dominant structure that is unsympathetic to its context and unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the area.

5. The development is therefore contrary to policy EN20 of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan and policy CS7 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. These policies require the protection of the character and appearance of a locality through high quality design that respects local design features.

Living conditions

6. The windows to the playhouse have been obscurely glazed to prevent overlooking from within it of neighbouring houses and gardens. A non-transparent plastic screen to its balcony is proposed to further reduce overlooking. Actual overlooking could therefore be adequately controlled. Nevertheless, the perception of overlooking from the elevated windows, ladder and balcony would remain, resulting in poorer living conditions for neighbours than it is reasonable to expect. The development is therefore contrary to policy EN20 of the Local Plan which, among other matters, seeks to prevent such harm.

Other matters

7. The playhouse is enjoyed by a nine year old child. As it has a low door it will be too small for him in three to four years' time and the appellant seeks a temporary permission for this period to allow the playhouse to remain in place. However, as I have found that the development causes harm contrary to the development plan a temporary permission would not be appropriate in this instance.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Ian Radcliffe

Inspector