

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2017

By Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

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

Decision date: 15 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/17/3177861
121 Henley Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6DW

- 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 Graham Wightman against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 170524 dated 29 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 25 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and single storey front extension following demolition of existing car port and utility room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Appellant's grounds of appeal refer to an offer to revise the submitted proposals. However, there is no information before me to indicate that the submitted plans were formally revised and my decision must necessarily be based on the plans determined by the Council.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and on the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two storey, end of terrace property in a short terrace of four properties, on the south side of Henley Road, within a predominantly residential area. There is a narrow passageway between the appeal property and the end property of the adjoining terrace of houses (No. 123). On the south side of the road, and despite a number of alterations and extensions to some of the houses, there is a consistent pattern of short terraces of four properties, with open gaps, particularly at first floor level between the terraces. In the surrounding area, there is a greater predominance of semi-detached properties, but the general character and appearance of well-spaced properties with gaps, particularly at first floor level, between properties is continued.
5. I have noted the guidance in the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance 2003: *A Design Guide to House Extensions* (SPG), which advises that

two storey side extensions should normally be designed to be smaller in scale than the main property. However, in this case, the existing ridge line across the whole terrace and the adjoining terraces is in my view a dominant and uniform feature and for that reason I do not consider that the proposed continuation of the ridge line for the two storey side extension would, taken on its own, harm the character and appearance of the existing property. However I agree with the Council that the length, depth and bulk as well as the detailed design of the front extension across the extended width of the property and the uncomfortable juxtaposition with the existing front bay window would overwhelm the scale and proportions of the existing property. It would therefore be a visually discordant feature.

6. The proposed side extension, which would also extend the existing ridge line at roof level, would bring built development up to the side boundary line. As a result of the adjoining property at No. 123 which has already been extended up to its side boundary line, and notwithstanding the proposed hipped roof form, there would be a very narrow gap between the two properties. This would in my view be visually oppressive and from some street scene views would appear to create a terracing effect. The removal of the wider open gap, particularly at first floor level would harm the prevalent pattern of development in the local area of well spaced properties with open gaps between the short terraces.
7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the existing property and of the street scene. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS7 of the adopted Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 as amended 2015, Policy DM9 of the adopted Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 and the adopted SPG, all of which seek a high quality of design which respects the character and appearance of existing buildings and the local context.
8. The Appellant has drawn my attention to other extensions which have been permitted and built in the vicinity of the appeal property and which he considers are similar to his own proposal. Each proposal must be judged on its individual planning merits. However, although there is limited information before me in respect of these other examples, I have nonetheless taken them into account in my consideration of this proposal.
9. I agree that the development at No 145 Henley Road has many similarities with this proposal, but there is single storey development on its eastern side, thus maintaining the general pattern of open gaps, particularly at first floor level, between properties which is prevalent in the local area. I have also noted the Appellant's contention regarding permitted development rights regarding the proposed porch extension. However, these matters and other examples do not lead me to change the conclusion I have reached in respect of the harm to the predominant character and appearance of the local area, which I have found in respect of this proposal. I also do not agree with the Appellant's contention that the sketch diagram in the Council's SPG showing a two storey side extension with a set back from the frontage and lower roof line compares with the proposal, and proposed relationship with the neighbouring property, which is before me.

10. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including in representations, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR