
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2017

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/17/3173541

25 Mayhew Crescent, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6BX

- 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 Ms Deborah Young against the decision of Wycombe District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/07141/FUL, dated 3 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of a 2 bed, two storey additional dwelling adjacent to 25 Mayhew Crescent. Modification to existing pedestrian access and demolition of shed, along with associated works including new detached garage with external and landscaping works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a 2 bed, two storey additional dwelling, modification to existing pedestrian access and demolition of shed, along with associated works including new detached garage with external and landscaping works adjacent to 25 Mayhew Crescent, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6BX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/07141/FUL, dated 3 August 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1988-PL-01B, 1988-PL 02E, 1988-PL 03D and 1988-PL 04B.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted, including walls, roofs, doors and windows shall be of the same colour, type and texture as those used in the existing dwelling.
 - 4) The scheme for parking and manoeuvring indicated on the submitted plans shall be laid out prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted and that area shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose.
 - 5) A carbon reduction scheme for delivering a 15% reduction in carbon emissions on site through the use of decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before first occupation of the development. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the development is first
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occupied and shall remain operational for the lifetime of the development.

Preliminary matters

2. Although the application was made by Mr Steve Lacey, the appeal was made by Ms Deborah Young. However Mr Lacey has confirmed that the appeal can proceed in Ms Young's name.
3. This appeal follows a previous appeal¹ for a similar residential development on this site which I dismissed on 16 June 2017.
4. Included in the Council's reason for refusal was reference to the adequacy of the amenity space for both the proposed and existing houses at the site. In light of my previous appeal decision for this site they have stated that they no longer wish to defend this part of their decision. Accordingly I can conclude, in this respect, that the proposal would accord with Policies G8 and H19 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (the 'Local Plan') which aim to ensure a good standard of amenity is provided for residents.
5. The Appellant has submitted a drawing with the appeal (1988-PL-12) which shows how the proposed garage could be enlarged to provide larger parking spaces and that the bin store could be repositioned so as to allow convenient access to the bins when cars are parked on the spaces in front of the garage. However I have no elevational plans showing the alterations. As such whilst I accept the alterations are minor, the details are incomplete. I therefore have determined the appeal on the basis of the plans considered by the Council.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and whether the development would provide acceptable parking provision and bin storage.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal site is located on the corner of Mayhew Crescent and Hepplewhite Close ('the Close'). The vicinity is strongly characterised by its topography with the land falling considerably from west to east. As a result, the floor level of the existing house is almost three metres higher than the pavement in the Close along its side boundary. The previous scheme showed the proposed dwelling to be stepped down from the existing dwelling by around a metre and to be around the same width. The Council suggest the proposed dwelling would be stepped down by around a further 0.15 metres and would be approximately 0.75 metres narrower, which appears reasonably accurate. Also the current proposal differs from the previous scheme by not including a rear facing dormer and by having its main entrance on its side elevation.
8. The proposal would be considerably closer to the pavement in the Close than the existing house, and would be significantly higher than the pavement. As such, the dwelling would appear prominently and would reduce the openness of the immediate area, which is primarily provided by the open plan nature of the gardens in the Close and Mayhew Crescent. However the gap of nearly two

¹ APP/K0425/W/16/3161935

metres that would be retained to the side boundary, the step down from the host dwelling and the simple roof design means the prominence of the development is muted, and is demonstrably less than which would have resulted from the previous proposal.

9. Furthermore the fencing that would be provided around the garage roof would be similar to that which already surrounds the existing garden, but would be in a more secluded position, further from the road. It would therefore have no adverse effect on the street scene.
10. All the other houses in the surrounding area are semi-detached properties and thus the creation of a short terrace of three dwellings would contrast with this. However by virtue of its narrow width relative to the other dwellings, and by having its entrance on the side elevation, the dwelling would have the appearance of an extension and would be similar to the two storey extension at the other end of the row of houses within which the site sits. Accordingly, in this respect the development would respect its context.
11. Consequently although the proposal would detract to some extent from the openness around this junction, I consider it would not be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the area. As such the proposal would accord with Policy G3 and Appendix 1 of the Local Plan which expect development to respect local context, and Policy CS19 of the Wycombe Development Framework Core Strategy (the 'Core Strategy') which requires, among other things, the creation of attractive public environments and a high standard of layout. It would also generally comply with the design guidance in the Housing Intensification Supplementary Planning Document. The development would also accord with the National Planning Policy Framework which says, as one of its core planning principles, that development should take account of the character of the area.

Parking provision

12. The proposed double garage would serve the existing and proposed houses. It would replace an existing double garage and would allow the provision of amenity space to be created on its roof.
13. The size of the spaces within the garage would fail to meet the standards given in the Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance (the 'Guidance'). However as the garage would replace one of comparable size which appears to be wholly useable, I do not consider the proposed garage would be unusable. Moreover there is opportunity for cars to park on the street along the side of the appeal site were the garage not used for parking.
14. Also though the construction of the garage would involve some excavation and the provision of a retaining wall to the adjacent property in the Close, I have no reason to believe this would prevent the two parking spaces from being able to be used.
15. Consequently, though the development would not meet the standards in the Guidance, I consider the development would generally accord with the aim of the Guidance to provide appropriate parking.

Bin store

16. Were a car to be parked in the space immediately in front of the bin store to serve the existing house, it would be difficult to gain access to the bins within. However there would be plenty of room elsewhere within the existing property to store bins and from my site visit it was clear that many neighbouring properties store their bins at the front of their houses where they are more conveniently accessible. As such were the store to be inaccessible at times, I consider it likely residents would simply move their bins elsewhere. This would not detract from the proposal and it would remain to accord with Policy G3 and CS19 in terms of providing a development of high quality design.

Conditions

17. I have considered those conditions suggested by the Council against the requirements of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the Framework. Where necessary, in the interests of clarity and precision, I have altered the conditions to better reflect this guidance.
18. In accordance with the advice in the PPG and the Framework I have imposed the standard condition relating to the commencement of development and a condition specifying the relevant plans in order to provide certainty. I have attached a condition requiring the finishing materials to match those of the existing house, so as to protect the character and appearance of the area, a condition relating to the provision of the garage in order to provide sufficient amenity space for occupiers, and a condition to secure a scheme to assist in the minimisation of carbon emissions.
19. I have not attached the suggested conditions relating to bin storage as I do not consider it necessary for the bin stores to be built as shown as bins could acceptably be stored elsewhere on the site.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all other considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR