

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2017

by Simon Warder MA BSc(Hons) DipUD(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/17/3178724

40 Strand Way, Earley RG6 4BU

- 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 and Mrs Bicknell against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 170226, dated 23 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 10 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension over the garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the extension on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling within a modern development of generally similar properties. However, it is prominently located on a corner plot and adjoins an area of open space. An attached double garage projects from the front of the dwelling and extends close to a footpath which links Strand Way and Regent Close. This gives the appeal property an expansive frontage.
 4. The appeal proposal would add a first floor and pitched roof over the full extent of the garage projection. It would, therefore, considerably increase the bulk of the existing building. The scale and height of the extended wing would approach that of the main part of the house. As such, the resulting building would be unduly bulky and the projecting front wing would no longer be subservient to the main part of the house. These effects would be particularly apparent due to the prominence of the extension in the street scene and from the open space. In addition, the proximity of the extended two storey flank elevation to the footpath would have an overbearing effect on passing pedestrians.
 5. Consequently, I consider that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. As such, it would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Council's Core Strategy which requires proposals to be of a scale, mass and height appropriate to the character of the area and to integrate with existing dwellings. Nor would the
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proposal accord with the Council's Borough Design Guide which, among other things, advises that extensions should be subservient in form and scale to the original building and that front extensions should generally be no more than one storey in height.

6. The appellant has drawn my attention to a planning permission for an extension at 44 Strand Way (application ref F/2015/1209). I have not been made aware of the circumstances which led to the Council's decision. The scale and height of that extension would be similar to the appeal proposal and it would, therefore, have a comparable impact on the existing building. That said, it would be not as prominently located on a corner plot and adjoining a footpath. Every application or appeal must be considered on its merits. I am not persuaded, therefore, that the planning permission for the extension to No 44 provides a robust justification for the appeal proposal.
7. The appellant has referred to other similar extensions in the area. However, their locations have not been provided and I did not see any comparable extensions on my site visit. I can, therefore, give little weight to this consideration.

Other Matters

8. The appellant has expressed concern regarding the way the Council handled the application and the length of time it took to make the decision. However, my decision is based purely in the planning merits of the proposal.
9. It has been contended that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupier of 4 Regent Close with regard to loss of light, privacy and outlook and would impact on existing trees. No 4 has a conservatory to the rear and a fairly short rear garden. The proposed first floor extension would be close to the boundary at the end of that garden. By virtue of its height, length and proximity, I consider that the extension would have an oppressive effect on the outlook from the rear garden and conservatory of No 4. Whilst I am not convinced that the extension would be harmful in respect of the other concerns raised, its impact on outlook serves to reinforce my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Simon Warder

INSPECTOR