

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2017

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 25 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/D/17/3180351

12 Aylesbury Crescent, Slough, SL1 3ES

- 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 S Mughal against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/05874/003, dated 10 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 8 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. There are two main issues. Firstly, the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Aylesbury Crescent; and secondly, the effect on highway and pedestrian safety with respect to off-street parking provision.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is an end of terrace, two storey dwelling set in a suburban street of similar houses arranged in pairs and short terraces. There is a gap between No 12 and its unattached neighbour, created by driveways providing access to the rear of each property. Similar gaps between other properties and wider gaps between dwellings on corner plots are characteristic in the street scene, providing a spacious layout and openness through the gaps, towards the long rear gardens where trees and vegetation are visible.
 4. The proposed extension would extend almost to the shared boundary at both ground and first floor, significantly reducing the gap between the dwellings. Policy EX11 of the Slough Local Development Framework Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted in 2010, states that two storey side extensions should be set 1m away from the shared side boundary in order to maintain a visual gap between buildings and avoid a terracing effect. The SPD does allow for a smaller gap at ground floor with a
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minimum 1m gap at first floor in certain circumstances. However, these do not apply in this case.

5. In view of the relatively spacious setting of Aylesbury Crescent and the fact that existing extensions maintain gaps between buildings and so preserve this generally open character, I consider that the proposed extension with no significant set back from the shared boundary at either ground or first floor would result in an unsympathetic and uncharacteristically cramped form of development that would unacceptably detract from the spacious character and appearance of the street scene.
6. Although, due to the lack of any side extension at the neighbouring property, a gap would remain between the appeal dwelling and its unattached neighbour, this situation may change. That would only serve to exacerbate the cramped and inadequate separation between the two dwellings, further detracting from the character and appearance of the street scene. It would not therefore provide a justification for an exception to the SPD guidance.
7. The extension has been designed with a setback from the front elevation of about 1m at first floor and the roof is set down from the main ridge. This, together with the modest width of the extension compared with the width of the original dwelling, would ensure that the extension, when viewed from the street, appeared subservient to the original house.
8. The dwelling has already been extended at ground and first floor to the rear. The proposed extension would join and widen the existing rear extension. Despite the overall width, this, in itself, would not materially harm the character or appearance of the dwelling and would therefore be acceptable as a design. However, its proximity to the shared side boundary would result in an overdevelopment of the plot in terms of width which would be unacceptable and contrary to SPD Policy DP3.
9. It is concluded on the first main issue that although the proposed two storey side extension would not be out of keeping in scale or design with the existing dwelling, owing to its proximity to the shared boundary it would have a materially detrimental effect on the spacious character and appearance of the street scene of Aylesbury Crescent. This would be contrary to Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006-2016 (CS), Policies H15, EN1 and EN2 of The Local Plan for Slough, adopted 2004, the SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework. Taken together these policies expect residential extensions, amongst other things, to be of a high quality design that responds to and is compatible with their surroundings and respects the existing layout and building lines such that there is no significant adverse impact on the existing street scene.
10. The appellant draws my attention to a similar two storey side extension at 18 Aylesbury Crescent that, he states, was allowed on appeal. However, No 18 adjoins a corner plot and so there remains a significant gap between the extension and the neighbouring dwelling, which is angled away from No 18. The circumstances of this extension are not therefore comparable with the appeal proposal.

Highway and pedestrian safety

11. The existing dwelling, which has three bedrooms, appeared to have two useable parking spaces on the frontage. The Council suggests that the spaces do not meet the standard dimensions but at the time of my visit a medium sized family car was accommodated in front of the bay window, with sufficient space to accommodate a similar sized vehicle on the opposite side of the front door. Although at the time of my site visit the side alley was fenced across and inaccessible by a vehicle it could potentially provide an additional off-street parking space. The proposed extensions would increase the number of bedrooms from three to four.
12. Policy EX40 of the SPD resists extensions where net car parking would be lost and, in the case of a 4+ bedroom house, there would be fewer than three off-street spaces. However, explanatory text in paragraph 10.2 states that this requirement can be reduced to two spaces where the site has good access to public transport services. Aylesbury Crescent is in an urban area and within a short walk of a bus route. It is also within walking distance of the mainline railway station and local shops. I therefore consider that in this location two off-street parking spaces would be sufficient and adequate space to accommodate two vehicles appears to be provided on the frontage.
13. It is therefore concluded on the second main issue that the proposed extension would not lead to any materially detrimental effect on highway and pedestrian safety with respect to off street parking provision. There would thus be no conflict with Core Policy 7 of the CS or with the SPD.

Conclusions

14. Although I find that no harm would occur to highway or pedestrian safety, this does not alter or outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the street scene of Aylesbury Crescent.
15. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR