



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2019

by G Jenkinson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/19/3222111

41 Raven Road, Stokenchurch HP14 3QW

- 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 Mrs Elaine Avery against the decision by Wycombe District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/07830/FUL, dated 29 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 19 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is extension to first floor rear dormer window, erection of dormer window to rear and provision of roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

3. No 41 Raven Road is a modern chalet style two storey semi-detached dwelling house. Its roof ridge runs parallel to the street and first floor front and rear dormers are positioned centrally on each pair of semi-detached houses. This design symmetry is a strikingly uniform and dominant feature of the regularly spaced dwellings in the street scene and wider area. The appeal site is located within the AONB.
4. A second floor rear dormer has been added to the host dwelling to create second floor accommodation above the existing first floor dormer. Planning permission for this dormer has previously been dismissed at appeal (APP/K0425/C/17/3172803 and an enforcement notice has been issued by the Council requiring its removal. This notice was upheld at appeal (Ref APP/K0425/C/17/3172804). The proposal seeks to remedy the existing situation by reducing the size of the second floor rear dormer, re-siting it to the left and installing velux roof lights in place of the element that would be removed.

5. Whilst the proposal would result in a significant reduction in the size of the second floor dormer when compared to the unauthorised dormer in terms of its width, the proposed dormer would nevertheless appear as an incongruous form of development given its height and depth. Its off-centre position would exacerbate this along with the visual prominence of the host dwelling from the road to the rear. I accept that the existing dwelling is of limited architectural quality, however, my concerns relate to the impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
6. The Council has not raised any concerns in respect of the proposed first floor dormer extension and rooflights and I can see no reason to disagree with its findings in relation to these aspects of the proposal, particularly given that it now appears that the Council has granted planning permission for them (Ref 18/07829/FUL).
7. I therefore conclude that the proposed second floor rear dormer would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area in conflict with policies G3 and H17 of the Adopted Wycombe District Local Plan (2004) and Policy CS19 of the Wycombe Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2008). Amongst other objectives these policies taken together seek to secure a high standard of design that respects local context, so as to maintain and reinforce its distinctiveness and particular character. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which seeks to ensure that new development is of a high quality design, and integrates with the surrounding character.
8. I find, as did the previous Inspector, that whilst the proposal would impact upon the host dwelling and its immediate setting, it would mostly be visible against the backdrop of the dwelling and surrounding residential development and therefore would not be prominent in the wider AONB. The proposal would not therefore harm the appearance or the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and would not therefore be contrary to the requirements of the corresponding Development Plan policies. However, this does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its immediate area as identified above. I find no conflict with the development plan policies relating to the AONB.

Other Matters

9. The appellant has drawn my attention to a second floor dormer at No 61 Raven Road. However, like the previous Inspector, I am unaware of the particular details and circumstances relating to it and it is not representative of the prevailing uniform design of the houses in Raven Road or the character and appearance of the area. I therefore attach limited weight to this example and in any event, I must determine the proposal before me on its own merits. The dormer at No 61 does not set a precedent or add any significant weight in support of allowing the appeal.
10. The Council is concerned that the proposal would result in an unwelcome precedent for future applications at similar sites in the immediate vicinity, which would lead to further visual deterioration of the visual quality of the area. Whilst all planning proposals must be judged on their own individual merits, I consider that if this appeal were to succeed, this could set an

undesirable precedent which could in turn lead to significant harm to the character and appearance of the area if numerous such proposals were to be constructed.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gemma Jenkinson

INSPECTOR