



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2019

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/19/3230047

19 Wellington Avenue, Princes Risborough, HP27 9HY

- 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 Mark Collins against the decision of Wycombe District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/08261/FUL, dated 14 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 11 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is raising of roof, extensions and alterations including a garage conversion and formation of a porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area; and on the living conditions of the occupiers of 17 Wellington Avenue with particular reference to light and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site includes a detached bungalow within a residential area. This part of Wellington Avenue is largely characterised by detached bungalows of varying designs, many of which benefit from single storey garages to the side and some of which appear to include accommodation within their roofs. While the roof forms are varied, ridge levels are generally stepped in response to the land levels of Wellington Road which increase towards the north.
4. Within the wider context of the appeal site is Windsor Lodge, a part two, part three storey flatted development, and beyond the neighbour at 21 Wellington Avenue are varied buildings set back from the road forming part of Princes Risborough Primary School.
5. Generally, there is a feeling of openness around the dwellings on this part of Wellington Avenue as a consequence of their set back from the road and the spacing to their sides, particularly at roof level. This spacing also allows for views through to rear gardens and mature trees creating an attractive open and leafy backdrop to the street scene.
6. The proposed ridge level of the roof would be broadly comparable to that of No 21, but it would be significantly above that of No 17. This would erode the

- pattern of stepped ridge lines to this part of the street scene, and would result in an awkward relationship with No 17 given the substantial height difference.
7. My attention has been drawn to the development at Windsor Lodge. I acknowledge that this is of greater height than its neighbour at 8 Wellington Avenue. However, the roof form of Windsor Lodge is hipped away from the boundary and there is a vehicular access running between these properties providing significant spacing. These factors result in a materially different relationship to that between the appeal site and No 17. Here, the proposed roof would be set very close to this neighbour, emphasising the height difference and the resulting prominence of the appeal dwelling.
 8. The proposal would also result in increased bulk at roof level as a consequence of the greater width to the dwelling above ground floor, together with the half-hipped roof form and large box dormer.
 9. The dormer would be to the rear and would be set in from the edges of the proposed roof. However, it would have a similar height and width to the existing dwelling roof. As a result of the relationship with No 17 which has a much lower roof that is also pitched away from the boundary, the dormer would be clearly visible from Wellington Avenue and would therefore add considerably to the massing of the roof.
 10. Together with the height of the roof which would be greater than the ground floor level of the dwelling, the increased bulk of the roof results in a roof form that would be disproportionate to the host dwelling and prominent in the street scene. This prominence would be compounded by the discordant effect arising from the incongruous angle of the hipped sections of the roof compared to the pitch of the roof proposed over the dwelling's front projection and entrance.
 11. Furthermore, the development would significantly reduce spacing to the sides of the dwelling and the openness of the site, as well as views through to the rear of the site.
 12. The development would therefore be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and would be contrary to the guidance within Appendix 4 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2004) (as saved, extended and partially replaced) (WDLP). This advises that dwellings as extended should respect the scale and character of the surrounding area including significant gaps or openness in the street scene; and that dormer windows should be small and unobtrusive, and avoid interfering with the original design of a building and causing visual intrusion to the street scene.
 13. The appellant has put forward examples of other properties and permissions in the area in support of the proposed development. I do not have full details that led to these proposals being accepted, but from the limited information before me it appears as though none are directly comparable to the particulars of the development proposed. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
 14. I therefore conclude that the proposed roof extension would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area. As such, it would be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Wycombe Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) (WCS) and saved Policies G3 and H17 of the WDLP. Together, these include a requirement for a high

standard of design that respects and reflects the local context so as to maintain and reinforce its distinctiveness and particular character. For similar reasons, the development would also be contrary to Policies DM35 and DM36 of the emerging Wycombe District Local Plan, although as this is not yet an adopted part of the development plan, I afford these policies less weight.

Living conditions

15. Saved Policies H17 and G8 of the WDLP advise that development will be required to safeguard the future amenity of residents including with regard to daylight, sunlight and visual intrusion, and will not be permitted where the proposal would have an adverse effect on the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. WDLP Policy G3 is also referenced in the Council's second reason for refusal. However, it seems to me that this policy relates to consideration of the effect of development on the character of an area rather than living conditions, and it is of limited relevance here.
16. The increase in the height and bulk of the dwelling would be most significant closest to the boundary with 17 Wellington Avenue where currently on the appeal site there is a single storey garage with a flat roof.
17. No 17 has a ground floor window in close proximity to the boundary facing this garage. While some oblique views would remain to the frontage of the appeal site owing to the relative positions of the dwellings, the main outlook from this window would be onto the flank of the dwelling. As proposed, this would be of much greater height than No 17, and together with the substantial increase in bulk of the roof closest to this boundary, the appeal proposal would have a significant enclosing effect on the outlook from this window, dominating views and reducing the amount of daylight available to it. This would not be mitigated by the hipped sections of the roof which would be set above the roof level of No 17.
18. The appellant has highlighted that the Council's Officer Report states that light levels enjoyed by neighbours would not be significantly reduced. However, this section of the report relates to consideration of whether light levels enjoyed by neighbours would be significantly reduced with regard to the Council's light angle guidance. The report indicates the proposal would comply with guidance on light angles, but that this guidance relates to projecting extensions, and I have found that the proposed increase to the height and bulk of the roof of the appeal dwelling closest to No 17 would adversely affect daylight to the neighbouring flank window.
19. The development would therefore cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of 17 Wellington Avenue with particular reference to light and outlook. While I acknowledge that the neighbour has not objected to the development, the harm I have identified would be permanent. I find that the proposals would conflict with Policy CS19 of the WCS and saved Policies H17 and G8 of the WDLP. Amongst other things, these policies seek to safeguard the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties.
20. For similar reasons the development would also be contrary to Policies DM35 and DM36 of the emerging Wycombe District Local Plan, although as this is not yet an adopted part of the development plan, I afford these policies less weight.

Other Matters

21. The appellant asserts that the development would provide more flexible accommodation for the future, and that it would improve the condition and thermal efficiency of the property and cater for the needs of younger people in the town contributing to the sustainability of the community. However, these factors do not outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of the occupiers of 17 Wellington Avenue.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR