

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2019

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/19/3230876

2 Jutland Close, Wokingham RG41 3UR

- 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 Vernon Riley against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. 190592, dated 17 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the street scene of Jutland Close.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that No. 2 Jutland Close is a 'link detached' dwelling with its original garage (which the Council says has been converted) connected to the garage of No. 3. The air space above the pair of garages provides a degree of separation between the two houses and the Council's objection to the appeal proposal is that the first floor addition would be uncharacteristic of the area and conflict with the rhythm and perception of spaciousness within the street scene.
 4. I do not entirely agree with the assessment that there is an easily identifiable rhythm of development in Jutland Close. There are only a small number of properties in the road – arguably insufficient for the establishment of any perception of a rhythm – and the ordnance survey site plan clearly shows that there is no marked consistency in the spatial pattern of development.
 5. However, that said, the original development of Nos. 2 and 3 was clearly designed as a complementary pair of dwellings with the combined footprint at ground floor level offset by the absence of built form above the garages. The proposed extension, occupying about half that gap, would significantly reduce the actual and perceived space between the buildings, the latter being particularly the case in the angled view when approaching from the junction with Culloden Way.
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6. In my view, this would harm the character and appearance of the street scene and make it difficult for the Council to reasonably resist a similar proposal above the garages between Nos. 4 & 5. There is also an issue as regards whether it is equitable to adopt a 'first come first served' basis wherein a permission to extend above the ground floor garage of No. 2 would presumably preclude the same proposal for No. 3 on the basis of the creation of an unacceptable terracing effect.
7. I have noted the submissions in the grounds of appeal that the Borough Design Guide indicates that the gap of a metre to the boundary for two storey extensions (or first floor extensions above an existing ground floor) only applies to 'formal suburbia' rather than more informal suburban areas such as Woollahill in which the appeal dwelling is located. However, irrespective of whether that is the actual intention of the guidance, I take the view that a minimum gap of a metre of all or part of the flank of a house to a side boundary in a medium / low density suburban area is a basic tenet of sound development management.
8. I acknowledge that in all other respects, including the proposed extension's set back from the front, set down from the roof and its detailed design, the appeal scheme is acceptable. I also recognise that there is an urgent need for additional family accommodation and I have taken this into account. However, for the reasons set out above I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the street scene of Jutland Close. This would conflict with Policies CP1 & CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy DPD 2010 and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.
9. The appeal is accordingly dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR