



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on Wednesday 7th February 2019

by Martin S. Lee, MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/18/3219130

4 Elmhurst Road, Thatcham RG18 3DG

- 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 & Mrs N Wyatt against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02100/HOUSE, dated 25 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2018.
 - The development proposed is alterations and extensions with addition of first-floor storey to existing bungalow and remodelling with external finishes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Local Planning Authority has forwarded a copy of its subsequent approval of a tandem application for planning permission for a proposal of reduced scale and complexity of roof design. Whilst this decision is noted as an alternative scheme capable of implementation at the appellants discretion, this appeal will be considered on its own merits.
3. Policy C1 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026 is titled 'Location of New Housing in the Countryside'. Whilst it confirms in its first sentence "There is a presumption in favour of development and redevelopment within the settlement boundaries of the following settlements", I can find no reference within the policy text providing any qualifications relevant to alterations and extensions of dwellinghouses and/or buildings. Accordingly, I shall disregard this policy reference for the purposes of this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The existing character of this part of Elmhurst Road as it runs down from the junction with Gordon Road to a ninety degree bend in its course comprises bungalows, typically set back from the carriageway edge (behind parking areas and/or gardens) and side boundaries. All have hipped roofs or features of some form with no gable ends facing the road, whether original or redeveloped buildings. The appeal building differs from these neighbours only in one notable

respect, that on one flank it abuts its boundary, notwithstanding the variety in individual dwelling designs the typical form is single storey presenting a sloping roof to the road of similar massing. That coherent theme provides an attractive, rhythmic character to the streetscene which has few notes of substantial variance.

6. A number of properties within this section of the road have been extended, but none to the height and volume of the combination two storey gable and dormer on the front elevation which the appeal proposal contains. The proposal would consequently, notwithstanding the appellants comments on design examples granted permission by the Local Planning Authority in the surrounding area, create a strongly jarring note in the current rhythm of the immediate streetscene, which would detract substantially from the established character of the existing built form of the area.
7. I find, accordingly, that due to the detrimental impact on the character of the streetscene that the proposal would be harmful to the character of the area and, therefore, it would be contrary to Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, the Council's adopted Housing Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance and the adopted West Berkshire Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document which, amongst other matters, seek to ensure high quality design of an appropriate scale which respects its context and protects local distinctive character.

Other Matters

8. The appellant argues that there is an inconsistency in the Local Planning Authority's decision making and has provided examples of planning permissions for two storey dwellings granted in the vicinity. However, I do not find the circumstances of the appeal property, in terms of the character of the street scene, the proportions of the site and the scale of the proposal to display sufficient similarities to these developments to find in favour of the appeal proposal.
9. I have taken in to account the appellants stated need to provide additional accommodation for their family. While acknowledging the benefit that would result in this respect, it is not sufficient to overcome the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan when read as a whole, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin S. Lee

INSPECTOR