



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2019

by A Denby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/19/3235069
235 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HY

- 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 Mohammed Sarwar against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 190487, dated 22 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is two-storey side extension and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Following the submission of the appeal the Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019 (LP) was adopted on 4 November 2019 and as such I have had regard to it in making my decision. The LP has replaced the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted 2008 amended 2015); Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009 and the Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012, amended 2015) Therefore, although the Council's decision refers to policies within those plans, they are no longer material considerations.
3. The Council have identified the Policies in the LP that they consider are relevant to the appeal scheme and the wording of those is very similar to that of the now superseded Policies. The parties have been provided with an opportunity to comment on the now adopted LP. I have had regard to the most up to date development plan position as I determine this appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host dwelling, with particular regard to scale; and
 - the living conditions of the occupants of No 237 Basingstoke Road, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site consists of a semi-detached property which is set back from its front boundary with a carport to the side and a detached garage beyond its rear elevation. The existing dwelling is modest, and has an uncomplicated form, with clear distinction between its compact main body and existing two-storey rear projection.
6. The appeal scheme proposes substantial extensions to the side and rear that would envelope the existing dwelling. Whilst the extensions would incorporate a setback, lower ridge height and retain a gap to the side boundary, due to their overall size, in particular the depth of their rear projection, they would compete visually with the existing property and appear overly dominant. A number of different roof lines would also be introduced, and this arrangement would further exaggerate their overall bulk and diminish the simplistic and compact form of the host property.
7. The side elevation and extent of the rear projection would be visible from the street, though it is acknowledged that the scheme adheres to certain aspects of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: A Design Guide to House Extensions, 2003 (SPG) and from the street, the size and design of the side extension, would be more in keeping with the existing dwelling. Therefore, the impact of the proposals on the wider character and appearance of the street scene would be limited and not result in harm.
8. However, due to their overall size and bulk the proposals would dominate the existing building and fail to respect its scale or proportions. On that basis the proposed development would be contrary to Policy H9 of the LP which seeks to ensure that extensions respect the character and appearance of the dwelling in terms of scale, location, materials and design.

Living Conditions

9. The proposal would result in substantial extensions to the rear of the existing property. No 237 is adjacent to the appeal site and has main habitable room windows to its rear elevation. I saw on my site visit that the two windows at ground floor serve a kitchen and living room. It is understood that the two windows at first floor are to separate bedrooms.
10. The dwelling at the appeal site already extends beyond the rear elevation of No 237. Considering this, the significant depth of the proposed extensions, proximity to the side boundary and their overall bulk, they would be dominant and visually intrusive features when viewed from this property, particularly from the ground floor, restricting outlook and creating an oppressive feeling when in the dwelling.
11. The existing car port does not extend significantly beyond the rear of No 237 and the detached garage, although sited closer to the boundary, is a flat roof structure and its height is not much greater than that of the existing boundary treatment. These existing structures are therefore relatively unassuming features, which when viewed from the neighbouring property, have limited visual impact.
12. This would not be the case with the proposed rear extensions which, although inset from the side boundary, due to their rear projection, height and overall bulk would be visible, dominant features when viewed from No 237. It is

however noted that due to the orientation of the appeal site there would be limited impact in relation to overshadowing.

13. It is also acknowledged that the appeal scheme would adhere to certain aspects of the SPG, such as not infringing 45-degree lines from the upper floor windows. However, achieving minimum criteria does not necessarily equate to an acceptable development, and each site needs to be considered on its own merits.
14. As detailed above, due to their overall size and bulk, the rear extensions would be dominant, visually intrusive and overbearing when viewed from No 237. On this basis the proposed development would be contrary to Policies H9 and CC8 of the LP which seeks to ensure that development does not cause a detrimental impact on the living conditions of existing residential properties in terms of visual dominance and overbearing effects or harm to outlook.

Other matters

15. It is noted that the extensions would allow for renovation of the property and modernisation of the living accommodation for the appellant, though I am mindful that this benefit would be personal to the needs of the appellant and their family and would not outweigh the harm I have identified.
16. Whilst the appellant has attempted to address the Council's objections to a previous scheme on the site, having considered the proposal on its own merits, this does not alter the harmful effects I have found. These other matters do not, therefore, lead me to a different conclusion.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Denby

INSPECTOR