



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2019 by Scott Britnell MSc FdA

Decision by P J Davies BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/19/3236710

Florella, Wethered Road, Marlow, SL7 3AF

- 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 & Miss M & K Holmes & Jack against the decision of Wycombe District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/06352/FUL, dated 1 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2019.
 - The development proposed was described as "The proposed extension will be built on the existing footprint converting the property into a chalet bungalow. The overall conversion will add valuable living space to the property. The new first will house a new open plan kitchen, dining and living room along with a new WC. The ground floor will be partially altered, with the intention of removing the existing porch and converting a bedroom into an ensuite, existing kitchen into a bedroom and living room into an entrance hall and utility room."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. Following the decision on the planning application, the Council adopted the Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019) (LP). This replaces the Local Plan, Core Strategy and Local Plan Submission Version. I have been provided with several of the adopted policies and I consider that LP Policies CP9, DM35 and DM36 are particularly relevant to this appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on residents' living conditions, and the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a detached bungalow set within a long rectangular plot on the north side of Wethered Road, close to the junction with Deanfield Close. Properties along the east side of that road, including those that back on to the appeal site, are single storey in height. The appeal site sits to the rear

of Nos. 2 – 8 Deanfield Close, with the appeal dwelling located directly behind No. 2 Deanfield Close (No. 2). The proposal seeks to raise the ridge and eaves height of the building, while changing its roof from a hipped to gable roof to provide an additional floor of accommodation.

Living conditions

6. Given the short depth of the rear garden at No.2 and the proximity of the appeal property to the boundary, the proposal would be highly visible from the windows at the rear of this dwelling and from the side and rear gardens. There are three narrow obscure glazed windows on the rear elevation of this property, while the largest window is clear glazed and serves a kitchen. The proposal would increase the height of the existing modest bungalow and the proposed roof form would significantly add to its scale and mass. Having regard to its proximity to No. 2 the proposal would result in an oppressive and overbearing form of development that would be apparent from within the garden and from the kitchen window of No.2. Notwithstanding that a kitchen is not generally considered to be an important habitable room, the proposal in this case would dominate the outlook from this window. The proposal would also be visually overwhelming from within No.2's garden, making it an unattractive amenity space. These impacts would be considerably in excess of the existing modest effects arising from the current scale of the appeal property.
7. The shallow rear gardens of Nos 4 – 8 Deanfield Close (Nos 4 – 8) lie perpendicular to the rear garden at the appeal site. The proposal would result in the living space being located at first floor level with bedrooms on the ground floor. To the rear of the property at first floor, bi-fold doors are proposed with a glazed Juliet balcony across. Although the dwellings at Deanfield Close are set at an angle to the appeal property, given the elevated height of the doors, there would be clear views of the rear aspect of Nos 4 - 8. As the appeal property is currently single storey, the doors would introduce commanding views of the neighbouring dwellings that do not currently exist. This intrusion would be exacerbated by using the first floor as the principal living area, wherein it can be reasonably expected to be in frequent use throughout the day. Consequently, there would be a significant loss of privacy to the rear gardens of Nos 4 – 8.
8. I have considered whether the use of the proposed first floor for other purposes, for example bedrooms, would negate the harm that I have identified. However, given the location, height and width of the bi-fold doors, I consider that they would be a conspicuous presence, and would give rise to an unacceptable perception of being overlooked, even when the room that they serve is not in use.
9. The appellants indicate that they would consider treating the glazing of the bi-fold doors. However, no details have been provided as to what treatments are being considered, and this would not prevent the sense of perceived overlooking or a loss of privacy when the doors are opened. Consequently, I do not consider that this would overcome the harm that I have identified.
10. I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on residents' living conditions. This would be contrary to LP Policies DM35 and DM36, which seek, among other things, to ensure that development proposals prevent

significant adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring land and property and preserve the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Character and appearance

11. Dwellings along Wethered Road are largely two-storey in height, although there is a pair of semi-detached bungalows at Nos. 6-8. There is also a primary school adjacent to the appeal site and a church opposite. The appeal property is located towards the front of its plot and projects significantly beyond the side elevation of No.2 Deanfield Close. It is in a prominent location within the street scene, at a point where the road is narrow, and is particularly noticeable when approached from the west. Due to its single storey height and hipped roof, the appeal property currently relates well to the dwellings immediately adjacent to it and contributes positively to the open character and appearance of this part of the streetscene. Given that the proposal would significantly increase the height, scale and massing of the property, the dwelling would attain undue prominence within the streetscene and would unacceptably harm its open character and appearance.
12. I have considered that there are a number of two storey dwellings along Wethered Road and a primary school with larger buildings adjacent to the site. However, by virtue of its location, height, scale and massing the proposal would unacceptably erode the positive contribution that the dwelling makes to the area's context, resulting in a form of development that would appear cramped and dominant.
13. In conclusion, the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to LP Policies CP9, DM35 and DM36 which seek to secure high quality design in development that, amongst other things, respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

14. The appellants suggest that the proposal would facilitate a significant improvement to the quality of a family home. While this may be a benefit, it would not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

Scott Britnell

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

P J Davies

INSPECTOR