
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2020

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/19/3239494

7 Bradwell Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6SD

- 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 Nick Parris against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02116/FULD, dated 9 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of a new two storey 3-bed dwelling after demolition of rear and side single story extension and garage of the existing semi detached dwelling-house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues of the appeal are the effects of the proposed development on:
 - The living conditions of the occupiers of 7 Bradwell Road, with particular regard to daylight, sunlight, outlook and privacy;
 - Whether there would be appropriate living conditions for future occupiers of the proposed dwelling, with particular regard to privacy and outdoor space; and,
 - The character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Living Conditions 7 Bradwell Road

3. Both windows serving one of the first-floor bedrooms at 7 Bradwell Road (No 7) would face the proposed dwelling. There would be limited separation between the proposed and existing properties. As a result of this, and the scale of the proposed dwelling, it would be an overbearing and dominant feature from what are the only windows in this room.
4. Given the orientation of the sun and the short distance between the proposed and existing dwellings, the appeal scheme would also greatly reduce the daylight and sunlight that could reach these windows. While I acknowledge the suggestion of installing other windows in this room, there are no plans before me of any such proposal.

5. Consequently, the appeal scheme would result in unacceptable impacts on the occupiers of No 7 with regard to outlook, daylight and sunlight for the first-floor bedroom.
6. There is also a ground floor living room window at No 7 that is orientated towards the proposed property. However, this room would have an alternative outlook and source of light from another window on a different elevation. This would allow sufficient light to enter the room and provide an outlook from it onto the garden area.
7. While windows facing No 7 from the proposed dwelling may give rise to a perception of overlooking, they would be fitted with obscure glazing and have limited opening. Were the appeal to be allowed, conditions could be imposed in regard to these windows and this would prevent any unacceptable impacts from overlooking.
8. Nevertheless, the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 7 with regard to outlook, daylight and sunlight. The proposal would be contrary to Policies CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006 - 2026) Development Plan Document (CS) and the SPD¹. These, in part, require development to make a positive contribution to the quality of life and ensure that the living conditions of both future residents of new development and of neighbouring residential properties are not compromised by lack of daylight or unduly restricted outlook.
9. Moreover, the proposal would fail to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) where it requires developments to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Living Conditions of Future Occupiers

10. Some overlooking between properties and into gardens is inevitable and tolerable in residential areas. I noted that this already takes place in the area. A large part of the garden for the proposed property would be visible from the adjacent roads and pavements. Nevertheless, an open frontage garden area with a smaller, more private space behind or to the side of the dwelling is typical of many corner plots nearby. It is also the situation at No 7 at present.
11. I note the guidance given in the SPD regarding the quality of outdoor space. Notwithstanding this, the overall space would exceed the garden sizes it suggests. Moreover, planting is proposed to provide additional privacy by helping to screen the larger outdoor area. I saw that landscaping and boundary treatments at the other corner plots at Bradwell Road had been used to the same effect. Were the appeal to be allowed, conditions could be imposed in relation to these matters.
12. Therefore, the proposal would provide appropriate living conditions for future occupiers with regard to privacy and outdoor space. It would accord with Policies CS14 of the CS and the SPD where they, in part, require development to make a positive contribution to the quality of life and provide sufficient quality outdoor space. The scheme would also comply with the Framework where it requires developments to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

¹ Quality Design - West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document

Character and Appearance

13. The scheme would bring built form at the site closer to Skilton Road than at present, narrowing the gap between properties. Nevertheless, the proposed dwelling would sit comfortably with the building line of properties on both Bradwell Road and Skilton Road. The proposal would introduce additional hardstanding and potentially additional domestic paraphernalia. Nonetheless, there are currently comparable off-street parking areas at many properties on both Skilton Road and Bradwell Road. Boundary vegetation on the opposite corner plot already reduces the openness at the junction adjacent to the site.
14. Some properties along Bradwell Road have good size gardens. Nonetheless, there is an inconsistency to plot size and shape. There would still be a relatively large green space adjacent to both road frontages that would not be significantly smaller than at other corner plots nearby. These factors, along with the wide verge at the junction, would maintain an openness to this prominent corner location.
15. The proposed dwelling would not match the design or appearance of the adjacent properties. Nonetheless, there is a mix of housing styles and types in the surrounding streets. In addition, the proposed property would have similar materials and proportions to those in the area. Consequently, it would not appear incongruous with either streetscene.
16. Therefore, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. It would comply with Policy CS14 and ADPP4 of the CS. These, in part, seek to provide new homes and require developments to respect the character and appearance of the area with a design and layout informed by the wider locality. The proposal would accord with the Framework where it states developments should be sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

17. I note comments from nearby residents to the application and this appeal. However, the Council have not raised concerns with matters such as the principle of development at the site, capacity of local facilities, pollution or highway safety. As I am dismissing the appeal, there is no need for me to consider these matters further. In any event, the lack of harm would be a neutral factor.
18. The development at Virginia Way, Reading² would not be seen in the same context as the appeal site and would have been considered against different development plan policies. Therefore, it is not directly comparable to the appeal scheme which I have assessed on its own merits and found harm with regard to living conditions.

Conclusion

19. For the reason given above, and taking account of all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR

² APP/E0345/A/13/2194437