



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2020

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/W/19/3242896

9 Elsley Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6RP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr P Ambrose against Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 191460, is dated 6 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as an 'extension to form double garage'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission for an 'extension to form double garage' is refused.

Procedural matter

2. Planning decisions need to be determined based on the relevant development plan policies and any other material considerations at that time. For the avoidance of doubt, based on the evidence before me, this includes the policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan, Adopted November 2019 (LP).
3. Prior to the appellant's appeal submission, the evidence indicates that the Council raised concerns with the proposal. Consequently, two sets of revised plans were submitted by the appellant to the Council. The revisions would alter the roof form and reduce the dimensions of the scheme. The appellant has indicated in their evidence that they would have anticipated them being the drawings considered by the Council. However, I note that the drawing numbers 1446.206B and 1446.206C ('Proposed elevations') have both been presented to me marked as 'draft'.
4. In the Council's evidence they have set out the reasons for refusal they would have given if they had of had jurisdiction to determine the proposal. They state that they have based their assessment on the 'Proposed elevations' drawing number 1446.206A. I am mindful that I have no evidence of any public consultation based on the appellant's revised drawings. Furthermore, I note that the initial submission resulted in a letter of objection from a neighbour. As such, whilst the revisions are relatively minor in nature, to consider the revised plans may prejudice the interests of interested parties. Guidance on the appeals procedure¹ sets out that it is important that what is considered by the Inspector is essentially what was considered by the local planning authority,

¹ Paragraph M.2.1 of the Procedural Guide – Planning Appeals – England, February 2020

and on which interested people's views were sought. Therefore, for the reasons above, I have proceeded to determine this appeal on the basis of the initially submitted plans, including the 'Proposed elevations' drawing number 1446.206A.

5. In the Council's appeal statement, they set out an assessment of the main material considerations. This concludes that the Council's only reason for refusal would have related to matters of design and the consequent harm to the host building and wider context.

Main Issue

6. Therefore, from the evidence I have before me, I consider the main issue in this case to be the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

7. The host building is a large detached dwelling located within its own spacious gardens. The north-west elevation has no first-floor fenestration but has some interest from the ground floor openings and the hipped-roof lean-to. The elevation has an unassuming character and appearance. This affords the gabled north-east and south-west elevations, and their greater articulation, to be the more dominant features of the building. These elevations provide 9 Elsley Road with a strong sense of verticality due to their height, and because the single-storey elements are limited to small floor areas.
8. The proposal would obviate the modest and simple lean-to. It would replace it with a large and bulky addition projecting significantly out from the two-storey form of the host building. Due to its significant single-storey projection towards Elsley Road it would add a horizontal emphasis in a prominent position. It would be a dominant and incongruous feature of the dwelling, detracting from the verticality and articulation of the north-east and south-west elevations.
9. In addition, the proposal lacks interest being overtly utilitarian in its design. For example, the fenestration would be limited on each side to a single opening and the garage door would be a single wide mass. Furthermore, the proposed facing brick materials would not match with this part of the host building. As such, the materials would not help the proposal to assimilate with its context.
10. The proposal would be set back from Elsley Road. However, it would project much closer than existing and appear as a substantial mass. It would be visible despite the existing landscape features. Whilst the appellant states that landscaping would be enhanced and provide further mitigation, I am mindful that landscaping should not be relied on to hide development that would otherwise be unacceptable. Moreover, views through the pedestrian and vehicular accesses would remain. Whilst the proposal would maintain a gap between the existing buildings, I do not find that this mitigates the effect of the proposal.
11. Therefore, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area. This would be contrary to Policies CC7 and H9 of the LP. These policies, amongst other aims seek the provision of high-quality design that protects the character and appearance of dwellings, and the area.

Other matters

12. I have considered the other material considerations raised in the evidence, including the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings. Furthermore, I have also had regard to other LP policies, including CC9. This policy, amongst other aims, seeks to protect the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, and it was referred to within what would have been the Council's reason for refusal. However, I have noted that the Council have not raised any concerns beyond what I have identified as the main issue. Based on the evidence available to me, including the public objection and my site observations, I find no other harm from the proposal.
13. The appellant has stated that the appeal has only be lodged due to the time taken by the Council to deal with the application. Whilst I can appreciate the appellant's frustration, that does not influence the Appeal Decision.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed, and planning permission refused.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR