



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2020 by Alex O'Doherty LLB(Hons) MSc

Decision by Sarah Housden BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/19/3240025

28 Clonmel Close, Caversham, Reading RG4 5BF

- 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 Pierluigi & Milena Stanzione & Kotwa against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 191325, dated 9 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side extension and single-storey rear extension.
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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. The Council adopted the Reading Borough Local Plan ('RBLP') on 4 November 2019 following the refusal of planning permission for the proposed development. Policy DM4 of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) referred to in the decision notice, has been replaced by Policy CC8 of the RBLP. Policy CC8 was referred to in the reason for refusal and the appellants have therefore had an opportunity to comment on any implications for the appeal scheme as part of the grounds of appeal. I have afforded full weight to Policy CC8 of the RBLP in my determination of the appeal.
4. At the site visit I viewed the appeal property from No 24 Clonmel Close (No 24), including from the kitchen and garden of No 24.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers, having particular regard to the effect on the outlook from No 24 Clonmel Close (No 24).

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The host property is a two-storey house at the end of a terrace of five dwellings, with a rear garden and a garage to the side. The Council has raised no objection to the proposed extension to the rear of the appeal property and I see no reason to disagree with that assessment. Due to its single storey height and limited length, it would not appear unduly dominant or overbearing when viewed from the rear garden area of No 30 Clonmel Close (No 30). The existing fence on the common boundary between the appeal property and No 30 will already cause some degree of shadowing over the area to the rear of No 30. Any additional shadowing from the proposed extension would be likely to be during a limited period and would not reduce the levels of sunlight reaching the garden/patio area of No 30 to a material degree. As a result, the single-storey rear extension would not be materially harmful to the living conditions currently enjoyed by the occupant(s) of No 30.
7. The side wall of the appeal property's garage is directly on the common boundary with the rear gardens of No 24 and No 26 Clonmel Close (No 26). The garage and the side elevation of the host property currently dominate views from the garden of No 24, but even so, a degree of openness remains. The garden of No 26 is wider than the garden to the rear of No 24 and only a short length of the rear boundary is enclosed by the side wall of the appeal property's garage. Hence it has a more open aspect across the adjacent driveways and road.
8. Although the proposed side extension would have a similar width to the existing garage (which does not extend across the full width of the common boundary with No 24), it would have a maximum width of approximately 5.8m at roof level. The eaves and ridge height would be equal to that of the host property. The combination of its width and height would result in a significant mass of built form on the common boundary with No 24.
9. It is recognised that the existing garage and the existing roof of the host property are significant features which already impact on the outlook from No 24. However, the short distance between the proposed first floor side extension and the habitable room windows of No 24 would exacerbate the impact. Whilst the appellants have referred to the 25-degree test and views from No 24's dining room windows, at my visit to No 24 I observed that the proposal would be clearly seen from the kitchen windows. From these windows the side extension would appear overbearing and oppressive due to its height and bulk and the outlook would be materially and harmfully reduced. I consider that the bulk and visual dominance of the proposal, at a very close distance to the garden of No 24, would increase the sense of enclosure when viewed from the garden area, making it much less pleasant to use.
10. The appellants have referred to the development at No 80 Clonmel Close¹, but as that planning permission related to the original development of 77 dwellings, rather than a subsequent extension, the circumstances are not directly comparable. The proposal has been assessed on its individual merits. The proposal would remove the existing landing window which currently overlooks the garden of No 24. However, this would be of limited benefit and would not offset the harm caused by the proposal to the outlook from No 24's rear windows and garden area.

¹ Local Planning Authority reference: 99/00/209/FUL

11. I conclude that the proposed side extension would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on the outlook currently enjoyed by the occupiers of No 24 which would be harmful to their living conditions. The proposal conflicts with Policy CC8 of the RBLP which provides that development should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties, including in terms of harm to outlook.

Other Matters/Planning Balance

12. The proposal would improve the living accommodation available to the appellants and to future occupants. However, as this would mainly be a private benefit, this has been given very limited weight. I find that the matters advanced in support of the proposal, do not, either individually or collectively, outweigh the harm identified, nor the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. Based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alex O'Doherty

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

Sarah Housden

INSPECTOR