



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 5 October 2020

by S Edwards BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/20/3248047

7 Oakham Close, Tilehurst, READING, RG31 6LD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Adrian Jones against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 191907, dated 9 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is 'First floor extension and rear two storey extension within a chalet style roof including internal structural alterations'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (1) the character and appearance of the host property and the area, and (2) the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers of no 6 Oakham Close, having particular regard to outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Located within an area of primarily residential character, the appeal site comprises a chalet bungalow of a similar style and design to nos 4, 5 and 6 Oakham Close which, as noted by the Inspector as part of the previous appeal¹, 'currently provide a pleasant rhythm and regularity to the street scene as they gradually step down the hillside'. The appeal property, by reason of its position at the head of the cul-de-sac, lies prominently within the street scene. The wider area is otherwise more mixed in character, and includes a number of two-storey detached properties.
4. The proposed development would alter the shape and profile of the existing property to a greater extent than the scheme previously allowed on appeal. The extension would not be set down significantly from the ridge of the dwelling's original roof, contrary to the Council's Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). As a result, the development would, by reason of its overall bulk and massing, lack subservience to the existing dwelling.

¹ APP/E0345/D/18/3214414.

5. Moreover, the formation of a large dormer window to the front elevation, which would span across a substantial part of the roof slope, would add to the undue prominence of the development within the street scene. This would be exacerbated by the awkward juxtaposition of the existing and proposed dormers. The size of the proposed dormer would detract from the simple form of the host property and stand out as an incongruous addition, which would have a detrimental effect within the wider street scene.
6. My attention has been drawn to the development which has been approved at no 83 Oak Tree Road. Despite its proximity to the appeal site, this property forms part of a different street scene, which is predominantly characterised by large properties set within a verdant setting. And as I do not know the circumstances which have led to this particular scheme being accepted, I cannot be certain that they represent a direct parallel to the proposal before me.
7. The proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the area, and would therefore conflict with Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan² (LP), as well as the Council's Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (2003). Amongst other things, these policies and guidance require householder development proposals to be of high design quality, but also respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and neighbouring properties.

Living conditions

8. The proposed development would introduce a first floor level of accommodation on top of the existing flat roofed garage, which lies within proximity to the boundary shared with no 6 Oakham Close (no 6). This neighbouring property sits on lower ground than the appellant's property, and lies several metres away from the boundary shared with the appeal site.
9. The proposed development would introduce a slightly larger roof form along the boundary shared with no 6, compared with the scheme previously allowed on appeal. Although this neighbouring dwelling sits on lower ground than the appellant's property, it also lies several metres from the boundary shared with the appeal site. Having regard to the additional bulk along the boundary with no 6 and the distance which would be maintained between the two adjacent properties, I am satisfied that the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of these neighbouring residents would be acceptable.
10. The Council is also concerned that the proposal would introduce a degree of overshadowing onto no 6, but this is not substantiated by detailed evidence. Again, the distance which would be maintained between the appellant's property and no 6 would ensure that the proposed development does not cause any harmful loss of light for the occupiers of this neighbouring dwelling.
11. On this main issue, I conclude that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers of no 6, having particular regard to outlook and light. Accordingly, I find no conflict with LP Policy CC8 and the Design Guide to House Extensions SPG in that respect,

² Adopted November 2019.

which notably seek to ensure that development does not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties.

Other Matters

12. I sympathise with the appellant who, at great expense, has sought planning permission to increase the size of the appeal property to provide suitable living accommodation for his family. However, it has not been demonstrated that the appeal scheme represents the only way in which additional living space could be created. Planning permission runs with the land rather than with the appellant. Consequently, if the appeal were to be allowed, the resultant extensions would become a permanent feature within the street scene, which would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area. In view of the harm I have identified, the personal circumstances of the appellant do not persuade me to reach a different conclusion.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR