
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2020

by J P Longmuir BA (Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/W/20/3252452

Cardinals Ride, Monks Walk, Ascot, SL5 9AZ

- 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 M Taylor against the decision of Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 19/03403, dated 5 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 5 bedroom dwelling and triple garage following demolition of existing dwelling and quadruple garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Monks Walk is dominated by trees and hedges which at least partly obscure many of the houses. The appeal site is fronted by a low brick wall and gates but is otherwise open. The existing house is prominent but deferential with simple form, massing and materials. It is on rising land with an extensive canopy of mature trees to the rear. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Townscape Assessment Volume 3 Ascot Group identifies the site within the characterisation of "Villas in a woodland setting". This is reflected by dwellings with large footprints, set within extremely large garden plots.
4. The proposed dwelling would be sited in the same position as the existing house. However, the new building would have more extensive vertically orientated windows which would emphasise its height and dormers which would make the roof more conspicuous than the existing. Consequently, the proposed dwelling would have a considerable presence and significant space would be needed to the sides of the main house and garage to avoid appearing cramped. However, the plot would not provide sufficient space.

5. The proposal also includes a one and a half storey offshoot forward projection. It would substantially extend forward of the main house, and even with the hipped roof, would appear significantly high, and therefore overly assertive. It would compete and detract from the intended principal elevation emphasised by its classical detailing. Moreover, the proposal would have an extensive footprint, and whilst the existing garage is forward of the main house, it is detached which visually breaks up the existing footprint.
6. The proposed house would have extensive glazing in relation to the walling compared with the existing. The proposal would look very busy from close view and would need to be seen from afar to be appreciated, which this plot would not offer. Furthermore, Monks Walk is a narrow road which does not provide a spacious foreground from which to see the proposal. As a result, the proposed building would dominate Monks Walk and would be conspicuous due to its largely open frontage. It would look out of keeping with the rest of Monks Walk where there is a visual predominance of trees and hedges over the houses.
7. I noted other new houses in the vicinity, some of which were substantial, and the appellant provides detailed analysis of the proposals and their plots as well as an appeal case¹. However, these other new houses appeared to be different designs within more spacious surroundings, less prominent or softened by vegetation. Whilst in some of the other roads new houses are conspicuous, I noted on my site visit that Monks Walk is discernibly different and the natural vegetation is more pronounced over the presence of buildings. The buildings are subsumed within spacious grounds relative to their scale, so that they are not overly dominant of the plot, which the appeal proposal would not achieve.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Policies DG1 and H11 of The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan require designs to be compatible with the street environs and residential development must respect scale. The Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2 and NP/DG3 require development to respect existing townscape, sensitive scale and bulk and for parking/garaging to be set back. The proposal would conflict with these policies and the Council's Townscape Assessment.

Planning balance

9. The Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and consequently, by virtue of footnote 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the tilted balance is engaged. This means that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
10. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal contravenes paragraph 127 of the Framework which seeks to promote design which adds to the overall quality of the area. The housing land supply shortfall questions the development plan housing

¹ APP/T0355/A/13/2206159

policies, but the general thrust of policies DG1 and H11 which require development to respect the character and appearance of the area is still an appropriate strategy.

11. In this particular case there would be no net increase in the housing stock. Whilst the site is accessible to everyday facilities, this also is the case with the existing dwelling. I acknowledge the appellant's points regarding the poor repair, outdated internal functioning and lack of energy efficiency of the existing dwelling, however the greater energy efficiency of the proposed house would be offset to an extent by the energy required in the building process. There would also be some economic benefits in terms of the building process.
12. In overall balance, I therefore conclude that the impacts of the proposal are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole.

Conclusion

13. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR