
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 December 2020

by Peter Mark Sturgess BSc (Hons), MBA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Monday, 07 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/D/20/3260324

7 Amberley Road, Slough, SL2 2LR

- 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 J Harbour against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/18028/000, dated 25 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey front extension and conversion of existing garage to habitable use.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are;
 - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the development makes adequate provision for on-site parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is an end terrace house in a terrace of four. All the houses in the terrace have a single storey front projection which contains a garage. All the projecting garages are of a similar size and shape and are joined on to their neighbour. The houses have gardens and parking areas to their fronts.
4. The front projections add to the rhythm of the terrace and their uniform width, when viewed from Amberley Road and from the spur road and footpath opposite, contribute to the character and appearance of the area. The widening of the garage would disrupt this rhythm of the terrace by changing the proportions of the front projection. As a consequence, the appeal proposal would be viewed as an incongruous and prominent addition to the front of the dwelling which would harm the character and appearance of the area.
5. The development plan is comprised of the Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, Development Plan Document (CS) and the Local Plan for Slough from March 2004 (LP). Both these plans pre-date the current version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

6. The relevant policy of the CS is Core Policy 8 which seeks, amongst other things, to promote a high quality of development in the Borough. The relevant policies of the LP are EN1, EN2 and H15 which all require new development, amongst other things, to be of a high standard of design and be compatible with their surroundings.
7. Despite their age, the policies relevant to this appeal are consistent with the current version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as this contains policies at paragraphs 124 and 127 which seek to create high quality buildings and developments which are sympathetic to local character. I therefore give these policies substantial weight in the determination of this appeal.
8. As a result, I find that the appeal proposal is in conflict with the above policies of the CS and the LP, as it would lead to the development of an incongruous and prominent addition to the existing house which would harm the character and appearance of the area.

Provision of on-site parking

9. The whole of the front of the house is currently used for car parking. At the time of my site visit there were two cars parked on the forecourt 1 in front of the garage and 1 to its right-hand side and the garage door was open. Although the appeal proposal would extend the garage to its right when viewed from the street, it is clear from my observations at the site visit and in the information supplied by the appellant in the statement of case that the site could still accommodate 2 cars should the proposal go ahead.
10. Core Policy 7 of the CS and Policy T2 of the LP recognise that the level of parking should be appropriate to its location and to the scale of development proposed. This should, according to the policies, also take account of local parking conditions.
11. The site in its existing state accommodates 2 cars, one in front of the garage and the other to its side. The garage itself, at the time of my site visit, appeared to be used for storage. In addition, the appellant has asserted that the garage itself is too small for modern vehicles, stating it has an 'opening width of 2.2m' and a maximum internal width of 2.3m. Moreover, Amberley Road itself is not subject to parking restrictions.
12. I am satisfied that should the appeal proposal be implemented that the current amount of parking available on the forecourt of the dwelling could be retained. It also appears to me that there is additional parking available in Amberley Road should that be needed. Therefore, the level of parking which would be available to the users of the property should the proposed development go ahead is appropriate to its location and the scale of the development proposed. The appeal proposal in this regard is consistent with Core Policy 7 of the CS and Policy T2 of the LP.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has suggested that should the development which is the subject of this appeal be rejected then he would make use of permitted development (PD) rights to extend upwards. In his view this would have a greater physical presence and visual impact on the host dwelling and the street scene than the appeal proposal.

14. The PD rights referred to by the appellant have been recently introduced and proposals to make use of these rights require prior approval from the local planning authority before any proposal is implemented. Neither party to this appeal has indicated that prior approval has been applied for or given for an extension of this nature. Therefore, it is my view that there is only a theoretical possibility that a development utilising PD rights under class AA will take place and as a consequence I can give this very little weight in the determination of this appeal.

Conclusion

15. Notwithstanding that I found that the site can adequately accommodate the level of car parking appropriate to its location I also found that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

Peter Mark Sturgess

INSPECTOR