



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 9 February 2021

by Scott Britnell MSc FdA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/20/3261929

69 Blandford Road, Reading RG2 8RR

- 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 Zubair Ahmad against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
- The application Ref 200807, dated 13 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 August 2020.
- The development proposed is first floor rear extension over an existing ground floor kitchen with internal alterations.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. While not referred to explicitly in the Council's Decision Notice, the Officer's Report refers to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: A Design Guide to House Extensions May 2003¹ (SPG). I have assessed the appeal proposal against that document and do not consider that the appellant would suffer any injustice by me doing so.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposals on:
 - The character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area; and,
 - The living conditions of the occupants of No. 67 Blandford Road with particular regard to privacy, outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal dwelling is a modestly scaled and well-proportioned building which has been significantly extended to the rear. It is of a similar era, scale and style to other dwellings nearby, the area exhibiting clear consistency in terms of architecture. The proposed first floor extension, due to its width and depth would appear as an overlarge and unsympathetic addition to the dwelling. In conjunction with the existing ground floor additions, it would result in the rear elevation being almost completely subsumed by extensions. Moreover, the stepped form of the proposed extension and the repositioning of the first floor bedroom window would appear contrived, while the proposed first floor

¹ Section 2 – Impact on the character of the surrounding area and design.

windows appear haphazard as a result of their different sizes and failure to align with the ground floor fenestration.

5. Consequently, the proposals would fail to respect the scale and simple form of the host dwelling, as well as the attached partner of the semi-detached pair. Although located to the rear of the host dwelling, the proposals would be visible from neighbouring gardens and would harmfully diminish the contribution that the dwelling makes to the character and appearance of the area.
6. I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area in conflict with Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan Adopted November 2019 (LP). These seek, among other things, to ensure that development is of a high quality design, responds positively to local context and that house extensions respect the character and appearance of the house. There would also be conflict with the SPG which states that poorly designed alterations will detract from the appearance of a property, and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) with regards to achieving well-designed places.

Living conditions

7. The existing first floor window closest to No 67 Blandford Road (No 67) is likely to afford views over the rear garden of that dwelling. However, as a result of its location closer to the boundary between the properties, the repositioned window would afford greater opportunities for overlooking, including towards the area closest to the rear elevation of No 67. Thus, the proposals would result in a greater loss of privacy to the occupants of that dwelling than currently exists and would be harmful to their living conditions.
8. Due to its stepped form, the proposed extension would not appear overbearing from the first floor windows of No 67, while the ground floor extension at that dwelling would prevent it from appearing overbearing when viewed from ground floor rooms. However, due to its depth, width, height and proximity to the boundary with No 67, the proposed extension would appear overbearing and overly dominant when viewed from the rear garden of that dwelling, including the area closest to its rear elevation. I saw how it would make these areas less pleasant to use and would result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of occupants.
9. While the proposed extension would sit to the south of No 67, it is unlikely to result in a significant degree of overshadowing or loss of light effecting that dwelling over and above the levels that currently exist, given the presence of the ground floor extension and conservatory at the appeal dwelling. Accordingly, and in the absence of substantive evidence to demonstrate otherwise, I find that the proposal would not affect light to No 67 to the degree that would be harmful to its occupants' living conditions. The lack of harm in respect of this matter, however, is a neutral factor in my assessment of the appeal proposal.
10. I conclude that the proposals would cause harm to the living conditions of the occupants of No 67 in conflict with LP Policies CC8 and H9. Collectively, these seek to ensure that development does not cause unacceptable detrimental impacts on the living environment of existing residential properties. There would also be conflict with Paragraph 127f of the Framework which states that

planning decisions should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing users.

Other Matters

11. Although the proposal would provide additional space for the appellant's family, this would be a principally private benefit. Further, no details of the developments at Nos 85 and 97 referred to by the appellant have been provided, so I am unable to consider how they might compare to the appeal proposal. I am also mindful that each case must be considered on its own merits. Moreover, a proposal may be unacceptable on planning grounds even if it has not attracted objections. Consequently, these matters do not lead me to reach a different conclusion to that which I have set out above.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Scott Britnell

INSPECTOR