
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 February 2021

by Christina Downes BSc DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 09 March 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/W/20/3263425

16 Ouseley Road, Wraysbury TW19 5JA

- 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 Amit Mukar against the decision of Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 20/01480, dated 22 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing single storey dwelling house. proposed erection of a new 2 storey family dwelling house.
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Decision

1. For the reasons given below, the appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. An amended plan was submitted with the appeal. This deletes reference to the proposed boundary wall and second access. The existing frontage hedges and access would be retained. I do not consider that the revisions would materially change the nature of the application or prejudice the Council's case or third party interests. My decision has therefore taken account of the revised site plan (drawing no: AH 002 01A Rev A).

Reasons

Effect on the character and appearance of the area

3. The appeal site is at the corner of Ouseley Road and Fairfield Approach and is presently occupied by a detached bungalow and garage. The area is typified by detached properties standing well back from the road behind frontages edged with hedges and low walls. Whilst there are varied building styles, there is a predominance of chalet type dwellings within this part of Ouseley Road. Some have their upper storey wholly in the roof space whilst others include a partial two storey element. The rooflines are relatively low and, overall, the area has a verdant and spacious character.
4. The proposal is for a substantial two storey dwelling with rooms in the roofspace. In order for the ridge to be similar in height to the adjoining property, there would be a large crown roof. This is not a feature that I observed elsewhere in this vicinity. I consider that the combined height and depth of the building, its consistent two-storey eaves height and its substantial roofscape would result in a mass of built form that would be unacceptably assertive and dominant on its surroundings.

5. Design cues do not appear to have been drawn from the surrounding area. In particular, the two-storey porticoed entrance and the use of brick quoins at the corners of the building, would emphasise the disparity of this house to those around it. It would appear as an intrusive presence within a streetscape where relatively modest and unassuming built form predominates.
6. For these reasons the proposed development would fail to integrate successfully with its host environment and be unduly harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the housing and design policies in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (2003), including saved policies DG1, H10 and H11. It would also contravene policies NP/HOU1 and NP/HOU2 in the Horton and Wraysbury Neighbourhood Plan (2020) and the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to achieve well designed places.

Effect on flood risk

7. The appeal site is in Flood Zone 3 and at high flood risk of flooding from the River Thames. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was submitted with the appeal but the Environment Agency (the EA) point out that this has not been based on the most recent modelling information, which places the site within the functional floodplain. It is though relevant that it is already occupied by an existing dwelling. The FRA indicates that this is not raised sufficiently to avoid inundation during a major flood event, when the effects of climate change are taken into account.
8. The FRA is contradictory about the proposed height of the finished floor level of the new dwelling. However, the EA is satisfied that both mentioned options would be sufficient to protect new occupiers from a major flood event. Its main concern in this case is whether the new dwelling, which would have a larger footprint, would reduce floodplain storage and exacerbate flooding elsewhere. The proposal is to provide voids below the building, which would mean that floodwater could flow underneath. It is appreciated that the Council has concerns about the use of voids as the collection of debris and their use for storage can limit their longer-term effectiveness. However, I saw many examples of such construction within the surrounding area. It seems to me that provided the finished ground floor level was raised to 18.48m AOD there would be sufficient space beneath to mitigate the loss of floodplain storage for the lifetime of the development. This would be a likely improvement in terms of flood risk over what exists at present.
9. However, the application drawings do not show the raised floor level, the underfloor flood voids or the steps that would be needed to reach the front door. These features are likely to significantly increase the height and bulk of the building and thus exacerbate the adverse impacts previously identified. In such circumstances, even if flood risk could be satisfactorily addressed through planning conditions the consequences would be unacceptable in visual terms.
10. The amended plan would address the Council's highway concerns. I have had regard to all other matters raised but have found nothing to alter my conclusions that unacceptable harm would arise for the reasons given above.

Christina Downes

INSPECTOR