
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 November 2021

by Martin Chandler BSc, MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/21/3278514

13 Renault Road, Woodley RG5 4EY

- 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 Chad Connell against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 210734, dated 1 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 April 2021.
 - The development proposed was originally described as: 'Extension to the front, side and rear of house, loft conversion with integrated PV cells on the roof and an adjustment to onsite parking'.
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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 surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey, semi-detached dwelling house. The front elevation consists of brickwork which frames a central area of horizontal cladding located between the ground and first floor windows. The composition of the dwelling is such that it creates a strong degree of symmetry between the pair of houses, a feature that is consistent amongst houses within the surrounding area. Indeed, the prevalence of symmetrical semi-detached dwellings generates a distinct uniformity to the built environment which dominates the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
4. Amongst other things, the proposal would seek to introduce a two-storey extension to the side of the property. However, rather than read as a clear addition to the property, the side extension would result in the reconfiguration of the front elevation. It would introduce a demonstrable gap between windows at first floor level and significantly alter the proportions of the building. Consequently, the width, form, and appearance of the resultant semi-detached dwelling would be distinctly at odds with its adjoining neighbour, a matter that would be entirely compounded by the introduction of a full width single storey front extension. Accordingly, the front and side elements of the proposal would cause substantial harm to the symmetry of the dwellings which in turn would dilute the important uniformity found in the locality. I note the Appellant's comments regarding any development unbalancing a semi-detached pair of dwellings, but this can be softened through the design-approach taken. In this

instance, for the reasons identified above, the design approach fails to pay due regard to the symmetry of the pair.

5. The proposal would also result in the space between Nos 11 and 13 being reduced. In its current form, it is not a generous gap, but it is consistent with other spaces between buildings. The reduced space between Nos 11 and 13, when combined with the concerns identified above, would have the effect of the widened and poorly proportioned property lacking space between it and its neighbour. This would have the effect of the property appearing cramped on its plot which would increase the prominence of the ill-considered proposal.
6. I note that concern has been raised regarding the loss of landscaping to the front of the property and its replacement with hardstanding. However, there are examples of substantial driveways within the locality and consequently, I am satisfied that this element of the proposal would not be to the detriment of the surrounding built environment. My attention has also been drawn to other examples of side extensions within the borough. However, from the information before me, the house types and their environment are materially different to the important characteristics identified above. Accordingly, the presence of these examples does not alter or outweigh my findings.
7. Consequently, for the reasons identified above, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore fail to comply with Policies CP1, CP3 and CC01 of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) as well as advice contained within the Wokingham Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012). Taken together, these seek amongst other things, sustainable development of a high-quality design.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons identified above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Chandler

INSPECTOR