



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2021

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/21/3283034

12 Paddocks Mead, Woking, GU21 3QW

- 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 Miss Susan Cunningham against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2021/0525 dated 7 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have utilised the Council's description of the development as per the decision notice as I feel it more concisely describes the development.
3. Shortly after the refusal of this application the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 20th July 2021. The Framework does not, of course, change the starting point for determination as being the Local Plan in accordance with S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Given the main issues to be considered within this appeal I do not find that this revision to the Framework impacts upon the basis of determination for this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the host dwelling and the character of the area.

Reasons

5. The proposal is for a two storey front extension which would enlarge an existing bedroom (bedroom three on the submitted plans) and provide an entrance area and downstairs toilet. Both the appellant and the Council note the presence of two storey front extensions of the wider estate. I note the Council's description as to Orvington Court which appears to be quite different to the appeal site in terms of context. Despite this I have no information as to the circumstances behind such development and can attribute limited weight to this notwithstanding the fact each case must be considered on its own merits.
6. The appeal site is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located within a group of similarly designed properties (both semi-detached and terraced) which stand around a central grassed amenity area off the highway. The pair of semi-

detached dwellings which the appeal site is part of are uniform in appearance. The building line of the properties around Paddocks Mead is uniform but the appeal site, and adjoining no. 11, are set back behind the main building line as can be seen from the submitted location and site plans. The proposal would essentially bring built form level with the building line of no. 13.

7. Given the existing set back of the appeal site, as well as the general site context, I find that the impact upon the wider area (beyond Paddocks Mead) would be limited essentially due to it being relatively limited in views except from within the amenity area around which Paddocks Mead is constructed. It is difficult to bring development forward of a front elevation (at some 6.47m in height) without appearing dominant due to the notable uniform character of the properties along both sides of Paddocks Mead. The strong uniform character within the immediate area of Paddocks Mead means the proposal would present as out of character and thus incongruous within Paddocks Mead itself.
8. In terms of the host dwelling itself the two-storey built form would, I find, unbalance the pair of semi-detached dwellings as a result of both scale and massing with particular regard to its narrow width. In addition the window design is inconsistent with the existing pair and would appear at odds with the adjoining dwelling. I find the proposal would present as an incongruous addition that would dominate the front elevations of the pair of properties in question and would not make a positive contribution to the street scene or character of the area.
9. I note the appellant's reference to page 82 of the Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document 2015 (SPD) but the proposal illustrated in that guidance is representative of a detached dwelling and thus does not raise the same issues identified with particular regard to the balance of the pair of properties which the appeal site is part of.
10. The proposal would be contrary to Woking Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS21 which requires new development to respect and make a positive contribution to the streetscene and character of the area paying due regard to other characteristics of adjoining buildings and the SPD which requires that extensions to the front must result in balanced architectural composition. The proposal would also be contrary to paragraphs 130 a) and c) of the Framework which confirm that planning decisions should ensure developments add to the overall quality of the area and are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

11. I note that it is stated that the planning fee was waived on the basis of medical need but I have no evidence of this before me other than the appellant's commentary in their statement. I note the information submitted by the appellant concerning the medical needs of her son living at the appeal site but this information was not submitted with the original application and was not, therefore, considered by the Council when determining the original application.
12. There is no reference to such circumstances within the delegated report nor correspondence with the Council. The Council have not, therefore, had opportunity to comment upon the information which is before me. In the interests of being open, fair and transparent I can only attribute the new information before me limited weight at this stage.

13. For reasons set out in the appellant's statement, it is stated that an additional toilet is needed, on the ground floor, as the property currently only benefits from one toilet facility on the first floor. The NHS letter provided confirms the condition, however, I do not find it confirms the need for the proposal as set out within the appellant's statement. Whilst I am sympathetic to the condition of the appellant's son, I have no specific evidence before me to support the need outlined meaning I can only attribute limited weight to this matter. Even if I had evidence regarding the need for the ground floor toilet in particular the condition outlined does not evidence a requirement for the additional bedroom space which also forms part of the proposal and thus contributes to the overall scale of the proposal on the front of the appeal site.
14. I note a number of third party comments relating to this proposal. Some comments in support are noted but a lack of objection is a neutral consideration. Comments regarding the consultation process within the application process itself are outside the scope of this appeal. I have determined the case upon its merits and, in any case, I note the Council have confirmed that statutory procedures have been carried out with regard to neighbour consultation.
15. The proposal has been found, by the Council, not to negatively impact upon neighbouring amenity with regard to matters such as loss of light (applying the 45 and 25-degree rules to properties as appropriate) and I have no evidence before me to conclude differently. I note that concerns have been raised regarding additional noise associated with the proposal but the construction period for a small development would likely be limited and, as such, it would not warrant a refusal of this appeal. A time condition regarding construction works could be applied to any consent granted in order to protect the amenities of neighbouring residents to ensure this during the construction phase. Noise from residential use does not warrant refusal and is, in any case, a matter for Environmental Health as a regulatory body.
16. Fear of a precedent is not a reason for refusal. Each case must be considered on its own merits. Comments relating to increased parking are noted, however, the Council outline that the proposal does not have an effect on the existing level of parking and I find there is unlikely to be an increase in parking arising from what would essentially be an extension to the existing bedroom. I have no evidence before me to evidence the proposal would impact upon highway safety and thus parking matters do not warrant refusal. Matters relating to materials for the proposal could have been secured via condition had I found the proposal acceptable in other regards.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR