



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2021

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/D/21/3272475

28 Woodroffe Drive, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 6ND

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant prior approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Dr Hannah Munns against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00375/GPDAA, dated 30 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of the construction of one additional storey.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The above description of development is taken from the application form. The form includes a lengthy written description of the proposal, but the main point to note from this is that the maximum height of the dwelling would increase from 5.25 m to 7.75 m.
3. Paragraph AA.3(12) of Part 1, Class AA of the Order ('Class AA') requires the local planning authority to take into account any representations made to them as a result of consultation, and to have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework'), so far as relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application. My determination of this appeal has been made on the same basis.

Main Issue

4. Amongst other things, Class AA permits the enlargement of a one storey dwelling consisting of the construction of one additional storey, immediately above the topmost storey of the dwellinghouse, together with any engineering operations reasonably necessary for the purpose of that construction.
5. Paragraph AA.2(3)(a) of Class AA requires prior approval to be sought for the matters listed in that paragraph. Having assessed the application, the Council is content that the development is acceptable in all respects, except in relation to the external appearance of the dwellinghouse. I shall focus on this as the main matter in dispute.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is a modest detached bungalow with a pitched roof. The proposal would project the building upwards by an additional storey to create a two-storey house. Viewed in isolation of surrounding development, the design would be acceptable. This is common ground between the parties.
7. However, the appeal site lies within an area characterised by bungalows. These vary in design, but there is a high degree of consistency in the vertical scale of the buildings. The dwellings within Woodroffe Drive are, without exception, low rise and this leads to a strong harmony of built form. A small minority of bungalows have had loft conversions, but these are generally confined to the existing building envelope and where dormer windows have been needed, these are subservient features which have not increased the ridge height.
8. The construction of an additional storey on the appeal property would create a dwelling which is significantly taller than others in Woodroffe Drive. The resultant building, with its two-storey eaves, would stand out as an incongruous and discordant feature in the street scene. The proposed development would fundamentally alter the architectural composition of the property relative to the street context and accordingly I find the external appearance of the dwelling to be unacceptable. The proposal would conflict with Paragraph 130 c) of the Framework which seeks to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment.
9. The appellant argues that the wording of Paragraph AA.2(3)(a)(ii) means that the only relevant consideration is the 'design and architectural features' of the front elevation, and does not empower the decision-maker to assess the development in its wider context. However, the wording of the regulations refers to the external appearance of the dwellinghouse, *including* the design and architectural features of the principal elevation. This indicates that matters for consideration are not confined to the appearance of the principal elevation, but can include other factors of relevance. In this case, it is neither sensible nor appropriate to consider the external appearance of the building in isolation; the street context is an aspect of the building's external appearance.
10. My attention has been drawn to an appeal decision¹ in which the Inspector commented that 'the GPDO wording suggests a relatively narrow assessment as to the design and appearance of the dwellinghouse itself'. I have not been provided with the decision letter and therefore do not know the background to that appeal. Nevertheless, each case must be determined on its own merits and, where prior approval requires the external appearance of a dwelling to be assessed, it will be a matter of planning judgement as to whether consideration is given to the building's relationship with nearby properties. In the current appeal, I have determined that the position of the property within a street of bungalows is of relevance, and for the reasons I have outlined I conclude that the external appearance of the dwellinghouse would be unacceptable. This justifies a refusal of prior approval.

Other Matters

11. The appellant makes reference to a property on Pack Lane whereby a former bungalow has had its ridge height increased to create a second floor. I do not

¹ APP/J1535/D/21/3266264

know the history of this development, but noted during my visit that Pack Lane has a different character to Woodroffe Drive. It is less suburban in appearance and also includes an element of two-storey housing. As such, this example can be distinguished from the appeal scheme.

12. It is argued that the existing dwelling is cramped and unsuitable for modern family living. Whilst I accept that the property may not meet the appellant's needs, this is not a factor which can be considered in the context of an application for prior approval. The matters for consideration are restricted to those set out in Paragraph AA.2(3)(a) of Class AA.

Conclusion

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

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR