



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2022

by Laura Cuthbert BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Friday 28 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/21/3285123

8 Rowlands Copse, Midgham, Reading, RG7 5SA

- 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 Natalie Bartlett against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02132/HOUSE, dated 28 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is a two storey and single storey extension to rear of house.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Within the context of an appeal under section 78 of the Act, it is not within my remit to formally determine whether the proposed development would fall under the provisions of permitted development as questioned by the appellant. If the appellant wishes to ascertain whether the development would be lawful, they may make an application to West Berkshire District Council under section 192 of the Act.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area, and the effect of the proposals upon the living conditions of No.7 Rowlands Copse and the occupants of the host dwelling, with respect to outlook.

Reasons

The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area

4. The appeal property is one half of a pair of semi detached two storey dwellings spanned by a gable roof. The mirrored first floor window arrangement on the existing pair of properties contributes positively to the character and appearance of the existing dwellings.
5. The hipped roof, two storey element of the proposed development would be centrally positioned along the rear elevation. Its positioning would sit awkwardly along the rear, unbalancing the symmetry of the pair and would appear as an incongruous addition to the rear of the semi-detached properties. Furthermore, the use of a hipped roof on the extension would be out of character with the existing gable roof. The roof design of the single storey flat

roof extension would also sit at odds alongside the proposed hipped two storey extension and the gable roof of the existing house.

6. The effect would be significantly greater than that caused by the existing rear conservatory, which is single storey and considerably less obtrusive than the proposed scheme. While the scheme would be sited to the rear of the property and not readily visible from the street, harm would still be caused to the area due to the visibility of the proposal from the rear gardens of nearby dwellings.
7. The appeal scheme would therefore cause harm to the character of the existing dwelling and subsequently the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the objectives of Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document (DPD) (2012) which sets out that new development must demonstrate high quality design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. It would also be contrary to advice in the Council's House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (2004) which states that an extension should reflect and add to the appearance of a house and its surroundings, and to the principles within Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 which seek good design sympathetic to the local area.

The effect of the proposals upon the living conditions of No.7 Rowlands Copse and the occupants of the host dwelling, with respect to outlook

8. There is a fully glazed door to the rear elevation of No.7 Rowlands Copse which serves the living room of No.7. Whilst there is another window serving the living room to the front of the property, the glazed door is the only opening serving this habitable room to the rear. There is also a bedroom window serving one of the bedrooms of No.7 situated close to the shared boundary with the appeal property. A raised patio area serving No.7 lies immediately to the rear of the house.
9. Due to the depth and height of both the single storey and two storey extensions, situated in close proximity to habitable rooms of No.7, the proposal would create a dominant feature which would have an overbearing effect upon the outlook from the rear facing habitable rooms of No.7. The proposals would also be overbearing to the outlook of the occupants of No.7 when viewed from the patio area.
10. The proposed development would also result in the blank side wall of the two storey extension being situated close to the bedroom window serving what would be the fourth bedroom of the host dwelling. It is considered that due to the proximity and depth of the two storey blank wall, this would have an overbearing effect upon outlook for the future occupants of this room.
11. For the reasons given above, I consider that the proposed development would harm the outlook of both the occupants of No.7 and of the host property. It would be contrary to the advice set out in the Council's House Extensions SPG which states that when designing an extension, the effect on the living conditions of neighbours is a prime consideration. It would also be in conflict with paragraph 130 (f) of the NPPF which states that development should have a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

12. My attention has been drawn to other similar extensions in the area. However, the circumstances of each proposal are likely to be different. In any event, the fact that similar extensions exist in the area is not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development in the above context. I also note that many of the extensions shown appear to be located at the flanks of the buildings, away from neighbouring attached dwellings, as opposed to in the middle of the property, as the proposal would be. I have considered this appeal on its own merits and concluded that it would cause harm for the reasons set out above.
13. I note the appellant's personal circumstances and their desire for more living accommodation for their family. While I am sympathetic to this issue, it does not outweigh the harm that the scheme would cause to the character and appearance of the area or the living conditions of the residents of the neighbouring property.

Conclusion

14. The development conflicts with the development plan. There are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Laura Cuthbert

INSPECTOR