



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2022

by Rebecca Thomas MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/21/3287655

Blue Daws, Pangbourne Hill, Pangbourne, Reading RG8 7AS

- 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 Maureen O'Brien against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02060/HOUSE dated 5 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2021.
 - The development is proposed rear dormer roof additions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. Having considered all of the evidence before me, I consider the main issues in this appeal to be:
 - i. Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Pangbourne Conservation Area (CA) and;
 - ii. the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of the occupiers of June Cottage with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is an attractive cottage with painted brick exterior and red tile roof, located on the edge of the street. The rear of the property has been extended by a single storey extension, which abuts the existing steep 'catslide' style red tiled roof. The area is characterised by a variety of dwellings, many of which front the street, of varying appearance and use of materials. I was able to see on my site visit that the rear roofslope is relatively from the street visible due to the position of the appeal dwelling and that of neighbouring properties.
4. The proposal would introduce two dormer windows located in this catslide roof to provide shower spaces to two bathrooms. The windows are proposed to be constructed of plain clay tiles to match, with tile hung sides and cheeks. Notwithstanding the sympathetic use of materials and design, the dormer windows would be relatively substantial, using a significant amount of space and would interrupt the distinctive slope and form of the existing roof. As seen

from the street, this would significantly alter the appearance and character of the catslide roof, resulting in a jarring addition to the house.

5. I have had regard to the Council's SPG¹ which says that dormer windows should be seen as a means of providing light and ventilation rather than increasing floorspace. The plans before me indicate that the dormer windows would provide a cubicle for a shower to two bathrooms, thus providing additional floorspace rather than lighting or ventilation and as such is in conflict with this guidance. The proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the house and as such the CA. It would also be contrary to Policy CS 14 of the Core Strategy² which expects development to demonstrate high quality design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. Policy CS 19 goes on to confirm that new development should (amongst other things) be appropriate in terms of scale and design and the proposal would conflict with this policy.
6. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in the exercise of the statutory duty, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The proposal would have a negative effect on the significance of a designated heritage asset and would result in "less than substantial" as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 202). No public benefits have been put forward to weigh against this harm. The proposed development would not conserve the heritage asset in a manner appropriate to its significance in line with one of the core planning principles of the Framework.

Living conditions

7. Concerns have been raised about the effect of the dormer windows to the occupiers at June Cottage as a result of overlooking due to the orientation of the two buildings and proximity of the proposed development, in particular with regard to a nearby first floor window. The Council states that the distance is approximately 9m, which conflicts with the SPG guidance, which advises a distance between windows of 21m between directly facing windows. Although at an angle, the frontage of June Cottage is located to the rear of the appeal site, and the closest dormer window would face that neighbour.
8. Whilst the windows are proposed to be fixed with obscure glazing, this does not preclude the direct intrusive overlooking between the appeal site and June Cottage, resulting in the loss of privacy to occupiers of June Cottage. The proposal would significantly alter the current relationship between the two houses; where there is no overlooking between the two properties, the development would introduce a direct loss of privacy to occupiers of June Cottage.
9. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect upon the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring residential property at June Cottage with particular regard to privacy. The proposal is therefore contrary to the amenity protection aims of the SPG and Policy CS 14 of the Core Strategy and the Framework.

¹ House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (July 2004)

² West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026); Development Plan Document (July 2012)

Other Matters

10. I note that the proposal follows previously planning applications however I am not furnished with the details of these applications. Nonetheless I have considered development before me on its own merits.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rebecca Thomas

INSPECTOR