



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 May 2022

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21ST June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/22/3291565

91 Aysgarth Park, Maidenhead, SL6 2HQ

- 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 & Mrs Peter and Pauline Janikoun against the decision of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 21/02974, dated 1 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as a first floor front extension to bedroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. It is noted that the Reasons for Refusal in the Council's Decision Notice cited Saved Policy DG1 of the Borough Local Plan (BLP). During the appeal process, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 2013-2033 (LP) was adopted on 8 February 2022 which supersedes the policies of the BLP. The Council have supplied copies of LP Policies QP1 and QP3 which this decision is to be assessed against and have commented that this change in policy does not change any of the elements of the reasons for refusal¹. I note that the appellant in their appeal statement has also commented upon these policies. That said, I have therefore made my decision on this basis and have only referred to the adopted policies of the LP in this decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development upon the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located along a cul-de-sac which leads off the main Aysgarth Park, a meandering spine road which runs through the residential estate. Aysgarth Park leads to a number of cul-de-sacs that contains formally laid out speculative housing which appears to date from the late twentieth century. The dwellings as part of this estate contains detached and semi-detached dwellings which have a symmetry in their design elements with pitched and side gabled roof forms with a simple and functional appearance with materials ranging from red, cream and brown brick with a concrete tiled roof. Boundaries are generally open with vegetated front gardens and hedging, and there are also visual gaps to the first floor level in between properties where glimpses to the tops of trees

¹ Letter to the Planning Inspectorate from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Dated 22 February 2022

in rear gardens are experienced. These elements present a spacious and leafy character that is a positive characteristic of the area. Whilst there is evidence of extensions and alterations seen throughout the estate, they are generally subservient to the main dwelling and retain the positive characteristics which contribute to local distinctiveness.

5. The appeal site lies to the end of one of the characteristic cul-de-sacs and displays a number of positive qualities which are experienced within the street scene, being one of the characteristic semi-detached dwellings and containing many of the important design elements and original roof forms and visual gaps between properties. In this case the appeal dwelling is detached and there are glimpses to vegetation beyond behind the dwelling and a public amenity space beyond which reinforce the local character and distinctiveness of the area. Whilst there have been extensions to the existing dwelling these are generally subservient to the original component of the dwelling.
6. In undertaking extensions to existing buildings, LP Policies QP1 and QP3 seeks that development fosters high quality design and a sense of place, with particular regard given to urban grain, layouts, rhythm, scale, bulk, massing, amongst others. The Borough Wide Design Guide (BWDG) supports these policies and gives further specific guidance in relation to design principles and detailed design considerations that for extensions there is an emphasis on subservience and responding to the existing site and context of the locality.
7. With regards to first floor front extensions, the BWDG seeks that they should not break the main street building line, would not be prominent in the street scene, and two storey front extensions would only be acceptable where the building is set back and has adequate distance in a large plot. Whilst the existing dwelling is detached and has a relatively secluded positioning, the built form of the development takes up much of the width of the plot with minimal setback to the front boundary. Whilst there is no established strong building line along this side of the cul-de-sac, the dwellings are simple and functional in their design elements with small front extensions, mainly for the provision of porches. The proposed first floor extension would in essence create a two storey forward protrusion which would overcomplicate the functional design and be like nothing else surrounding. Additionally, the increased visual bulk and massing of the built form of the first floor would not present well to the street scene and have a dominant appearance which would be present in views along the cul-de-sac to the open space beyond.
8. I acknowledge that there are two storey extensions to existing dwellings as illustrated in Appendix 1 of the appellant's statement, however these are all to the sides of the dwellings and subservient in their form and appearance. Neither of the extensions shown are to the front of the dwelling or overcomplicate and present a massing or visual bulk towards the dwelling's design in a similar way to the proposal at the appeal site. As such these examples do not add justification for the appropriateness of the appeal proposal.
9. In conclusion of this matter, the proposed first floor front extension would be clearly disproportionate and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building, and the local distinctiveness of the locality. The proposed scheme would therefore be contrary to LP policies QP1 and QP3, which are supported by the BWDG as described previously.

Other Matters

10. I note comments with regards to the lack of objection from neighbouring residents and the Parish Council regarding the scheme. The lack of objection does not imply compliance with planning policies which have been assessed in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers

INSPECTOR