



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 June 2022

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/22/3292725

2 Bramblings, Caversham, Reading RG4 7XB

- 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 Graham Lightfoot against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 211793, dated 4 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is ground floor extension, conversion of garage and construction of an attached garage and re-pitching of roofs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the existing house and street scene.

Reasons

3. Bramblings is a small cul-de-sac made up of 2-storey detached houses set around the road layout, which consists largely of a 'T' shaped turning head. The houses differ in their form, although their scale, mass, and their overall style is similar. There is also consistency in their materials and details.
4. The houses have small front gardens, which are mainly laid to lawn with some small shrubs, low hedges, and trees but no other boundary treatments. This gives the cul-de-sac a sense of openness. There are also gaps in the built form at either side of the turning head that allow views of houses on nearby streets. Gaps of this nature are common in the area and add to the open character.
5. All the houses on Bramblings have attached garages, apart from the appeal property, where the existing double garage is separate. The garages are single storey and stepped back from the front elevation of the host dwellings making them modest and subservient additions. In addition to its garage, No. 1 Bramblings has a small single-storey side extension.
6. The appeal property is positioned at the closed end of the road on the south side of the turning head. As the cul-de-sac is very short, even though the site is set down slightly from the highway, the existing house can be seen from Waterberry Way. However, the existing garage is much less visible, set back from the house, and can only be seen from within Bramblings.

7. The proposed extension would also be set back from the house with most of it following the building line of the existing garage. Given this, and that there are few locations where the proposed extension would be viewed front on, where the scale of the extension would be most apparent, its effect on the street scene would be limited. Also, its single storey, low profile would allow views of nearby properties beyond thus preserving the open character of the street.
8. However, although the overall increase in the footprint of the property would be modest, the proposed single storey extension would be large relative to the existing house. The front elevation of the extension would span almost the width of the plot and would be wider than the front elevation of the house. Given this, despite the use of matching materials, and the extension being single storey and stepped back from the building line, it would appear dominant and not as a subservient addition.
9. Therefore, for the reasons above, the proposed extension would harm the character and appearance of the existing house. Accordingly, I find the proposal would be in conflict with the aims of policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan that seek to promote good design and protect character and appearance, including that of the existing house.

Other Matters

10. While there have been no objections from surrounding neighbours to the proposal, the absence of objection does not in itself render the scheme acceptable.
11. I note that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on biodiversity. However, this does not affect my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

12. With regard to the above, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. It has not been demonstrated that there are any material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise in accordance with it.

Hannah Guest

INSPECTOR