

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2022

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/22/3303247

85 Upper Village Road, Ascot SL5 7AJ

- 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 Jonny Hayhurst against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 22/00010, dated 2 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is a part 2 storey part single storey side extension and rear extension and a new porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effects of the proposal on:
 - i) The safety of public highway users in relation to parking provision at the site; and
 - ii) The character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

Highway safety and parking

3. This part of Upper Village Road is a closely developed street of residential and commercial properties, with many of the residential properties having limited on-plot parking. I saw at my site visit that there is strong pressure for on-street parking in the area. No 85 is a 4 bedroom detached house set close to the road, with no space between the front boundary and the well used public highway footway.
4. Photographs and plans submitted by the appellant suggest that 3 cars can physically be parked on the site, but the space available for parking and manoeuvring and the location of the front door would make this particularly difficult on a day to day basis. At my site visit, I saw 2 cars parked on the property, one overhanging the footway and the other of which was particularly short and parked in a space which would not be deep enough for most cars. I

agree with the Council that there is only one practical and viable parking space at the property - to the side of the house and perpendicular to the street.

5. The proposal would add a 2 storey side extension, dropping down to a single storey at the back, plus a front porch. The porch would further restrict parking and manoeuvring space directly in front of the house, but I have discounted this already and consider that the porch would have no material impact on parking provision.
6. The supporting text to policy T1 of the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026 (NP) explains that there is a high level of car ownership in the area and that an increase in on-street parking in recent years is adding to traffic congestion and represents a safety risk to pedestrians and other road users. As there is only one viable on-plot parking space for this sizeable house, I would expect that space to be in regular use. It is important that it remains fully useable without impeding use of the public highway.
7. The Council's 2004 Parking Strategy appears to be informal guidance which has not been adopted a Supplementary Planning Document, but Borough Local Plan 2013-0233 (BLP) policy IF2 does say that it will be used as a guide for parking provision. Its standards include that where the space is located in front of a garage, the distance from the face of the garage to the highway boundary shall be a minimum of 6m.
8. The side extension would provide a garage/store with a garage style door. The garage/store would be too small to park most cars in so cannot be counted as a parking space. To preserve a single space on site, sufficient space is needed for the garage door to open with a car parked in front. The remaining space would, however, only be about 4.8m deep as measured from the footway, so that parking a vehicle there would very likely hinder use of the garage and/or cause the vehicle to overhang the footway.
9. I find that, due to the limited depth that would be left for parking, the proposal would very likely result in parked cars encroaching onto the footway, forcing pedestrians to move around the obstruction and in some cases to step into the carriageway. In the alternative, if the parking space is not used for this reason, this would put added pressure on the limited amount of on-street parking which would potentially cause other highway safety problems due to cramped parking and excess manoeuvring.
10. I conclude that the proposal would not make adequate provision for on-plot parking and would therefore prejudice the safety of public highway users. It therefore conflicts with the aims of BLP policies QP3 and IF2, the Parking Strategy and NP policy T1, to create a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists, with the provision of easy and safe access and an appropriate level of parking provision.

Character and appearance

11. Upper Village Road contains a wide variety of architectural styles and building sizes, so that it has a capacity to absorb further change. No 85 sits next to a railway cutting which provides an open and verdant setting to this part of the street, in contrast to the much more closely built up character to the other side of No 85. Although the proposed side/rear extension would extend up to the property boundary, this comparatively small addition would not significantly

affect this spacious setting, leaving the wide cutting and its trees substantially unaffected.

12. The extension would be designed to follow the angled boundary of the site, which tapers to the rear, so would not be of a traditional rectangular shape. Such oblique designs are not unusual however, and this proposal would fit well with the building and context. The extension would be set back from the street and would be lower in height than the existing house so that it would be a minor element in the street scene on Upper Village Road. It would also be seen across the cutting but only in medium range views, filtered by trees and with the existing house as a backdrop.
13. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character or the appearance of the local area. It accords in this respect with the aims of BLP policy QP3, NP policies DG1 and DG3 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that new development is of high quality design that respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Other matters

14. I have considered all other points raised, including the comments of the Sunninghill and Ascot Parish Council and the Society for the Protection of Ascot and Environs. I consider that the proposal would leave sufficient garden space to the rear, noting that it could allow for the indoor storage of cycles and bins to reduce pressure on outdoor space. I consider that, with adequate precautions, the development could be carried out without significant harm to the adjacent trees in the railway cutting. I have not been provided with any evidence to suggest that access for future maintenance of the extension and window cleaning would be an overriding problem.

Conclusion

15. Although I have found no harm in relation to local character and appearance or other matters raised, the highway safety implications of the proposed parking arrangements are sufficiently important for me to conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR