



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2023

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/23/3326963

143 Devonshire Avenue, Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey GU21 5QB

- 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 Azhar Haseeb against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2022/0631, dated 30 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is a rear ground floor and first floor extension, materials to match the existing main property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property, and the living conditions of the occupants as well as those of the neighbouring property.

Reasons

3. Devonshire Avenue comprises a mixture of semi-detached and terraced properties of a similar style. The proposed two-storey extension would reflect the form of the existing property with materials to match. It would, however, be a sizeable extension extending across the full width of the property and project beyond the extension to the adjoining property. The two-storey extension to No.141 has a single-storey element up to the shared boundary, and thereby together there would be an awkward juxtaposition between the two extensions.
4. The resultant property with the extension would also have limited separation to the substantial existing outbuilding sited along the rear boundary. Consequently, a large proportion of the plot would be covered in built form, significantly diminishing the amenity space serving the property and to the detriment of its appearance.
5. Other properties along Devonshire Avenue do have two-storey rear extensions. Specific details of those referenced by the appellant in terms of their scale, internal layout and relationship to their plots are not before me, and each case is to be considered on its own merits. The proposed development to No.143 would be a disproportionate addition which, together with the existing

outbuilding, would result in a cramped form of development that would adversely harm the character and appearance of the host property.

6. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (WCS) which seeks to ensure that new development is attractive, respects, and makes a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area. It would also be contrary to the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Woking Design Guide 2015 which has similar objectives and in particular the guidance in Section 9D that advises the layout of an extension should enhance the property, and that the size and location of the extension should not compromise the private garden amenity of the dwelling concerned or any of its neighbours.

Living Conditions

7. As extended, the property would have a deep form. The appellant's sight line diagram indicates that a 45-degree line taken from the neighbours' main windows would not be breached. Nonetheless, the appeal property is set further back than the neighbouring pair of semis (Nos.145 &147) and new windows are proposed to be added to the flank elevation.
8. The flank is sited close to the shared boundary and the proposed first-floor window would have a direct outlook over the rear elevation of No.145 and its garden. Any potential mitigation, through the use of obscure glazing, would not be appropriate as that would be the only window serving bedroom 5 (as proposed). To that end, I share the Council's view that this and other resultant changes to the windows serving the existing bedrooms are a symptom of the disproportionate scale and poor design which would compromise the living conditions of the occupants of the appeal property and result in a harmful loss of privacy for the neighbour.
9. Whilst the appellant has suggested the internal layout could be altered there are no details before me, and that would not address the other concerns in relation to the scale of the development or the loss of amenity space which would be substantially below the amenity space standards set out in the Council's SPD - Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight.
10. The proposal would thereby conflict with Policy CS21 of the WCS with regards to achieving satisfactory relationships to adjoining properties and avoiding harmful impacts in terms of loss of privacy, daylight or overbearing effect. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and the guidance within the Council's SPDs which reflect these aims and objectives.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has raised concerns with the communication received during the application process, advising that they would like to find a solution and indicating a willingness to reduce the depth of the extension. Whilst I understand the appellant's frustration, an appeal is not the process to evolve the scheme and I have considered the proposal on the basis of the plans on which the Council made its decision. Any alternative proposal is a matter for the Local Planning Authority.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR