

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2023

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/23/3326304

49 Quentin Road, Woodley, Wokingham RG5 3NE

- 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 R Eisner against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. 231154, dated 11 May 2023 was refused by notice dated 11 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension and single storey rear extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed first floor extension on the character and appearance of the street scene of Quentin Road.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that the appeal dwelling is one half of a semi-detached pair with a hipped roof to the flank facing the gable of No. 51, another semi-detached property with No. 53. The Council's concern is that the proposed first floor side extension would reduce the gap to No. 51 to an extent that would have a potential terracing effect harmful to the street scene.
 4. I acknowledge that the extension would be built over the footprint of the existing garage and that it would follow the convention of first floor side extensions by being both set down and set back (in this case 0.15m and 0.5m respectively). In my view this would make the extension acceptable as regards the appearance of the host dwelling itself.
 5. However, the 3m width of the extension would result in the eaves height wall being only 0.2m from the boundary with No. 51, whereas the Council's Design Guide stipulates that this gap should be at least a metre. This reduction in the gap between Nos. 49 and 51 would in my view result in a cramped arrangement that would harmfully contrast with the spacing between most of the other dwellings in the road.
 6. I am also mindful that as half of a semi-detached pair with No. 47, the appeal dwelling is already part a building that overall is of a substantial size. This also applies to Nos. 51 & 53, and with No. 51 having gables both to Quentin Road
-

and the appeal dwelling there would be a considerable mass of built form separated only by a modest gap.

7. This would result in a significant loss of skyline between Nos. 49 & 51 as well as the sight of a mature tree from Quentin Road and these disadvantages add to the harm caused. The Council has referred to the terracing that would occur in the event of an extension to No. 51, but as the appellant says, this would depend on a further approval by the Council, which would seem unlikely. However, in my view the harm would still occur with the narrowing of the existing gap at first floor level as currently proposed at No. 49.
8. The grounds of appeal draw my attention to other extensions to houses in the area and the resultant gaps between the buildings. Of these, I take the view that only the relationship between Nos. 65 & 67 Quentin Road is material to this appeal because it is part of the Quentin Road street scene. However, my understanding of that case is that the extended No. 67 was already a metre forward of No. 65 and the first floor extension was set back by the same amount. (I have noted that it was the gable and not the hip that was extended but it equates to the same relationship).
9. This cumulative 'stagger' would appear to be greater than in the current appeal, but even if I am wrong on that point my view of the relationship between Nos. 65 and 67 is that if this is a precedent it is one that should not be followed. This is because the outcome is one of a negative effect with a perception of a congested development harmful to the street scene, albeit I acknowledge that the harm is compounded by the subsequent full width ground floor extension to No. 65.
10. I have had regard to all other matters raised, but overall conclude that the appeal scheme would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the Quentin Road street scene. This would be in conflict with Policies CP1 & CP3 of the Wokingham Core Strategy 2010 and with Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
11. The appeal is dismissed accordingly.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR