



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 March 2024

By David Murray BA (Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/24/3337926

253 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 8HF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by K Hussein against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 232141.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a part single part two storey side/rear extension to dwelling, loft conversion to create habitable accommodation, velux rooflights and gable to front, second floor rear dormer plus internal alterations – (Variations to previously approved proposals 191028).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its setting in the local street scene.

Reasons

Background

3. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached two storey house set within a large garden although it lies in a frontage of mainly detached properties on the eastern side of Shinfield Road. I note that planning permission has been granted (retrospectively) for various front, side and rear extensions to the property (under ref. 191028 and 232143) and these are shown on the submitted plans as 'existing' but the plans of the new development as built and as now proposed do not accord with the permitted scheme mainly in terms of the hip to gable roof format and detailing; second floor flat roof dormer at the rear; front dormer window; and two storey rear extension. I will therefore pay particular regard to these further amendments.

Effect on character and appearance

4. The original semi-detached property has a hipped roof with a small pitch roof dormer over the main window at first floor which is partly built into the roof space. This still matches the attached neighbouring 'semi' although this is white rendered and the appeal property now has elevations in red brick. The permitted scheme allowed two storey extension to the side but this was designed with a hipped roof and an additional window positioned under the eaves.
5. The scheme now proposed and as built introduces a gable roof end, a dormer over the secondary window and an array of roof lights at second floor level on

the front elevation as well as additional fenestration. Taken together these proposed additions seriously change the appearance of the property and lead to a significant imbalance with the basic architecture of the attached semi. Further, the gable end and secondary dormer make the scale and appearance of the side extension not visually subservient to the form of the original dwelling. This visual impact is accentuated by the clutter of additional fenestration at first and second floor level. I find that where the work now proposed departs from the permitted scheme it would result in a form of extension which would significantly harm the design and symmetrical balance of the host semi and its setting in the street scene and would be at odds with the guidance set out in the Council's Design Guide.

6. The appellant suggests that the hip to gable proposal is acceptable as the house to the right (south) has been extended with a side gable but this is a detached property which is visually distinct in the street scene from the pair of semis forming part of the appeal site.
7. In terms of the other alterations away from the front elevation, the side 2.5 floor extension has a much higher roof ridge coupled with the high half-gable end forming the WC/ensuite bathrooms together with the high and extensive flat roof dormer at second floor level give rise to a visually awkward and ugly array of architectural forms. Although these design elements are away from the public realm of Shinfield Road they face the hinterland of rear gardens of other houses in Westlands Avenue and result in an unattractive form of development which would not help achieve a well-designed and beautiful place as set out in section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
8. The appellant suggests that the rear dormer is 'permitted development' but this has not been established through a certificate of lawfulness and as the work is shown on the submitted plans and forms part of the description, it has to be considered as part of the present proposal.

Planning balance

9. Overall I find that the works now proposed would seriously imbalance the design and proportions of this semi-detached property and visually harm its setting in the street scene as well as the wider residential environment. As such it conflicts with the guidance in the Borough Design Guide and the provisions of Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy as it would not be of a design and scale appropriate to the character of the area.
10. This finding has to be balanced with other considerations. The appellant says that the work was undertaken to make the property better laid out and to maximise floorspace. However, these private benefits do not outweigh the harm identified or the conflict with the development plan. This indicates that the appeal should not be allowed.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Murray

INSPECTOR