



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: 16 April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/23/3332588

44 Coppice Road, Woodley, READING, RG5 3RA

- 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 Mr Zaheer Hussain against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 231846.
 - The development proposed is the subdivision of the site and erection of a two-storey side extension to form 1 no. terraced dwelling with associated parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and its setting in the street scene; and
 - The effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of the host property caused by the reduction of the garden space.

Reasons

Background

3. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached two storey property which lies on the corner of Drovers Way/Coppice Road and Eastwood Road. It has a large garden to the side and other 'amenity' land which was used for 'front/tail-on' car parking at the time of my visit. The surrounding area is a mixture of mainly residential development with a small parade of shops and flats above on the opposite (eastern) side of Eastwood Road but sited at a lower level of the street. Other properties in the area tend to be two storey 'semis' and short terraces but there are bungalows on the northern side of Eastwood Road adjacent to the appeal site. It is proposed to extend the pair of semis with a 'handed' similar property which would result in a short terrace of three units.

Housing supply context

4. The appellant has submitted a recent appeal decision¹ for 234 units at Winnersh where the Council accepted in February 2024 that it could only demonstrate a 3.2 year's supply of housing land set against a four-year

¹ APP/X0360/W/23/3331651

requirement. This position is not updated or challenged by the Council therefore the provisions of paragraph 11(d) of the Framework have to be applied in this case as a material consideration.

5. In terms of policies in the Council's Core Strategy (CP) and Local Plan (MDD), there is no objection in principle to the erection of a dwelling on the site subject to maintaining and enhancing the character and appearance of the area and MDD policy TBO6 relates to new development of residential gardens.

Effect on character and appearance

6. In assessing this issue I have had regard to the Council's Borough Design Guide SPD.
7. Around the appeal site the properties in Drover's way/ Coppice Road follow a varied building line and No's 44/46 are set back slightly to reflect their corner setting. Viewed from the north the proposal would be consistent with the general form of the street scene along this road.
8. On the other hand, properties in Eastwood Road follow a regular building line with No's 1/3 also slightly set back leading onto the corner. Even taking account of the position and height of the flatted development on the southern side of Eastwood Road, I am concerned that the position of an additional property beyond the end of the semi would be an intrusive feature in this street scene. The new house and the extended side garden would have a dominating and exposed appearance much closer to the road and on a prominent corner. This imposing presence would be accentuated by the relationship of the new house adjoining a bungalow. The proposal would harm the character of Eastwood Road, particularly when viewed from the west, rather than 'solidify the uniformity' as the appellant suggests.
9. In terms of the effect of the additional private garden on amenity land I have noted the appellant's reference to other sites in the locality which are said to be similar but I have considered the appeal proposal on its individual merits. Moreover, although there could be some change to the character of the area caused by the introduction of a garden onto amenity land, it is the physical and visual prominence of the new dwelling itself, rather than the garden area, which would cause the fundamental and harmful change.
10. Overall on this issue I find that the new dwelling proposed as a side extension would be significantly harmful to the appearance of the street scene and would not maintain or enhance it. This conflicts with part (a) of Policy CP3 and parts 1 and 2(a) (i) and (ii) of MDD Policy TB06.

Living conditions

11. This issue is concerned with the residual garden of No.44 rather than that shown to be associated with the new dwelling. The Borough Design Guide SPD part R16 recommends a minimum depth of rear garden of 11m whereas the Council says that the remaining garden will only be some 7.75m in depth. Although such depth applies to the existing semis of No's 44 and 46 this is off-set in both cases by the extent of side garden which exists now even though there are also outbuildings/garages present.
12. The appellant suggests that while the general requirement of the SPD is not met, nevertheless, the residual garden is of sufficient size to allow for a variety

of activities and an appropriate level of privacy. Although the garden space is shown to have an area of 44 sq.m this is much less than that prevalent locally and it appears to me that its use would be limited as it would be overshadowed by the host property and the proposed new one from about noon each day.

13. Overall on this issue I find that the proposed scheme for the new house would result in an inadequate residual garden for the existing one and this would harm the living conditions of the occupiers. On this basis the proposal conflicts with the general guidance in the SPD and part 2(b) of MDD Policy TB06.

Planning balance

14. On the main issues I have found that the proposed extension to form an additional dwelling would have a significantly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area as the extension of the built development and proximity to the road beyond the building line would dominate the street scene along Eastwood Road. The proposal would also result in an inadequate residual garden space for the host property and harm the living conditions of the occupiers. These adverse effects mean that the proposal conflicts with the relevant provisions of the development plan, but this has to be balanced with other considerations.
15. In terms of national policy the proposal would not help achieve a well-designed and beautiful place as set out in section 12 of the Framework nor create a residential environment with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users as mentioned in paragraph 135(F). I find that the proposal conflicts with the Framework when this is read as a whole, and the proposal is not 'sustainable development'. The adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the provision of an additional single dwelling.
16. Although policies in the development plan for the provision of housing have to be treated as 'out of date' because of the Council's present position on housing land supply, other policies which are the most important for the determination of the application are consistent with the terms of the Framework and should therefore be given weight.
17. I conclude that the conflict with the development plan taken as a whole is not outweighed by other considerations and this indicates that the appeal should not be allowed.

Conclusion

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

David Murray

INSPECTOR