



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 July 2024

by Rebecca McAndrew, BA Hons, MSc, PG Dip Urban Design, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/24/3343997

8 Avebury Square, Reading RG1 5JH

- 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 Phil Lyon against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 240091.
 - The development proposed is a single and double storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a proposed single and double storey extension at 8 Avebury Square, Reading RG1 5JH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 240091, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved drawings: D2869-01 Rev A and D2869-02 Rev C
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council's Officer Report concludes that the proposed development would be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. However, this was not included as a reason for refusal on the Decision Notice. Given the detailed concerns raised by the Council in the Officer Report, as well as the comments received from a neighbouring occupier, I have considered this issue as part of the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are;
 - i. The effect on the character and appearance of the site and area; and
 - ii. The effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers of No. 7 and No.9 Avebury Square.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. Avebury Square is characterised by large detached and semi-detached homes, many of which have been extended in a variety of manners. The properties sit in a horseshoe shape, overlooking an attractive area of landscaped public open space.
5. The proposed two-storey side extension would sit in the same location and have a similar footprint to the existing garage to be demolished. It would infill the space above the existing garage, reducing the distance between the appellant's house and the main body of neighbouring property No.9. Nevertheless, a single storey structure to the side of the neighbouring house would retain an adequate separation distance between the properties at first floor level. This would be a similar arrangement to other properties in Avebury Square. Consequently, the proposed side extension would not give rise to a terracing effect, nor would it unduly harm the overall spacious character of the area.
6. The first-floor element of the proposed side extension would be set back from the front elevation of the forward-facing gable feature. The proposed setback would safeguard the front facing gable feature. Also, coupled with the set down below the existing ridge height, it would ensure the proposed extension would appear as subordinate to the host dwelling. It would not appear overly bulky or obtrusive within the street scene.
7. On my site visit I noted that No.15 Avebury Square includes a two-storey side extension, with a similar set back at first floor level which sits comfortably in the context of the dwelling and area. Taking all of the above into account, the proposed two storey side extension would respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area.
8. I recognise that the proposed single storey rear extension would include a part pitched, part flat roof design, rather than a hipped roof to reflect the host dwelling. However, it would replace an existing pitched roof conservatory, would include matching materials and would appear as subservient to the host property. Therefore, the proposed single storey rear extension would not unduly harm the overall character and appearance of the house or area.
9. In conclusion, the proposed extensions would sit comfortably in the context of the appeal property and street scene. Consequently, the proposals would not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or area. There is no conflict with Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) (LP) and the Design Guide to House Extensions (2021). Taken together, these seek to secure high quality development which respects the character and appearance of the dwelling and area.

Living Conditions

10. The Council considers that proposed two storey side extension would be harmful to daylight and sunlight to No.9. However, given that it would sit flush with the rear elevation of the neighbours' property, the level of sunlight or daylight to the neighbour occupier's home or rear garden would not be significantly reduced.

11. The Council considers that the roof form of the proposed rear single storey extension would appear as overbearing to both adjoining neighbours. I note that there is a difference in ground levels between the proposed extension and the adjacent rear gardens. However, the proposed extension would sit at a similar ground level to the conservatory it would replace, and it would not be significantly higher or deeper than that structure. Therefore, the relationship of the roof form with the neighbours would not be notably different to the existing situation. As such the proposed extension would not unduly harm the outlook of the residents of No.7 or No.9.
12. The proposed raised patio would be at a higher level than the gardens of the neighbouring properties. However, it would be at a similar level to the existing raised patio and it would extend a similar depth from the rear elevation of the appellant's home. The proposed patio would be shallower than the existing patio so there would be limited scope to use it as an area to sit out or socialise on. Its use is likely to be limited to a pathway around the proposed extension. Consequently, the proposed raised patio area would not give rise to significant overlooking or harm the privacy of neighbouring occupiers.
13. In conclusion, taking all of the above into account, the appeal proposals would not unacceptably harm the living conditions of either neighbouring occupier. Therefore, there is no conflict with LP Policies H9 and CC8 which seek to safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Conditions

14. I impose conditions regarding timescales and setting out the approved plans to provide certainty. I attach a condition in relation to materials in the interests of the character and appearance of the property and area.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Rebecca McAndrew

INSPECTOR