



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2024

by P Terceiro BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/23/3330134

71 Terryfield Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 7RY

- 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 Jim McCulloch against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
 - The application Ref is 23/05563/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as small first floor rear extension together with change of use to convert one 4 bedroom dwelling into one 3 bed dwelling and one 2 bed dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. During the course of the planning application, the appellant submitted a revised set of plans, which sought to address concerns raised by the Council. The Council, however, determined the application based on the plans initially submitted and advised that the revised plans were not subject to consultation and neighbour notification. An additional set of revised plans has been submitted with this appeal.
3. In comparison with the originally submitted plans, the latest revised plans submitted show several alterations. These include changes to the parking layout, bin storage, cycle storage, pedestrian access, revised internal floor areas, revised garden layout, as well as reconfiguration of the proposed extension and canopy. Whilst individually the proposed changes are minor, cumulatively they are substantial and fundamentally different to what was considered by the Council when it made its decision.
4. Therefore, in the interests of fairness, this appeal must be determined based on the plans on which the Council made its decision, and which have been subject to consultation. To do otherwise could unacceptably prejudice the interests of other parties. As such, for the avoidance of doubt, I have determined this appeal on the basis of the plans originally submitted with the planning application, ref 04 and 02A.
5. At the time of my site visit the property's rear garden had been separated with a close boarded fence and a house number has been placed in the proposed dwelling. Nevertheless, I have determined the appeal based on the submitted plans, ref 04 and 02A.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are:

- the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area;
- whether the proposal would create acceptable living conditions for future occupiers with particular regard to outlook, sunlight levels and internal floor space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. 71 Terryfield Road (No 71) is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling sited within a prominent plot located along the steep hill where the road bends. The dwelling has been previously enlarged, including with a part single part two storey side and rear extension.
8. Terryfield Road is characterised by pairs of semi-detached dwellings which are accommodated within wide plots and display a similar design and scale. Although some houses have been altered and extended, there remains a degree of consistency in terms of their external appearance. The plots are normally separated by low height hard boundary treatments or hedging and the dwellings have legible frontages, as well as a regular setback from the road and gaps between them. These factors provide the street scene with a pleasant and spacious character.
9. The proposal would introduce a new dwelling within the site and, in order to facilitate this, the existing part single part two storey side and rear extension would be enlarged. Despite its depth, due to its lower height, set back from the front elevation and modest width, the resulting extension would appear subservient to No 71. Although the proposed front elevation would be broadly similar to the existing and the dwelling would be accessed through the existing side door, the use of the associated residential paraphernalia, including house number and letter box, would indicate the presence of an independent dwelling. Consequently, the proposed dwelling would not harmonise with its surrounding context, as it would fail to reflect the prevailing features and characteristics of established housing due to its modest scale and massing.
10. The frontage of both dwellings would be used for parking, in a similar arrangement to the existing situation. However, limited space would remain available to provide a boundary treatment to physically separate both properties. Therefore, the common frontage would appear at odds with the character of the locality, where the dwellings normally have their boundaries clearly defined.
11. I acknowledge that the boundary treatment between the gardens of both properties would have limited visibility from public vantage points. However, the proposal would result in a row of terraced dwellings that, for the above reasons, would appear incongruous in the street scene and detract from the established pattern of development in its own terms. Therefore, the proposal would unduly intensify the residential use on site and fail to constitute an efficient use of land.

12. As such, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policies CP9 and DM35 of the Wycombe District Local Plan 2019 (LP), where these policies require development to achieve a high quality of design which improves the character of the area and the way it functions. Further, the proposal would fail to accord with the Residential Design Guidance 2017 (RDG), where it seeks to improve and reinforce local character.

Living conditions

13. House 1 would have a set of patio doors on its rear elevation. The proposed first floor extension to house 2 would project a number of metres beyond the rear elevation of house 1. The extension would be sited on the common boundary between both dwellings and given its two-storey height and scale, it would be extremely imposing for the residents at house 1. Therefore, the proposal would cause undue harm to the outlook of the residents at house 1, when viewed from the rear garden of, and rear facing windows in, house 1. Further, because of the orientation of the properties, the proposed extension would unduly harm the sunlight levels received by the rear patio doors in house 1.
14. LP Policy DM40 requires all new dwellings to meet up-to-date nationally described technical housing standards for minimum internal space requirements. In the case of house 1, a two-storey dwelling with one single and one double bedroom, this figure would be of 70m². The appellant's Design and Access Statement advises that house 1 would have a gross internal area of approximately 64m², whereas the Council sets out that this house is measured to about 67.84 m². Be as it may, this dwelling would fall short of the recommended standards. As a consequence, the proposal would fail to provide an adequate internal floor space for its future occupiers.
15. Therefore, the proposal would fail to create acceptable living conditions for future occupiers with particular regard to outlook, sunlight levels and internal floor space. The proposal would be contrary to LP Policies CP9 and DM35, which amongst other things, support development that contributes positively to making places better for people and provides an appropriate level of amenity for future occupants. Although not referenced in the reason for refusal, interested parties note the relevance of LP Policy DM40. For the reasons set out above, the development fails to accord with this policy. Further, the proposal would conflict with the RDG, where it seeks to protect residential amenity.

Other Matters

16. While concern about precedent has been raised, I have considered this appeal on its own individual circumstances as set out in my reasoning above. Any future planning applications would also be subject to similar individual assessment, on their own merits, at the time of submission.
17. The proposal would be acceptable in relation to other matters, including the living conditions of the adjoining neighbours. However, these are neutral factors that weigh neither for nor against the development.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

18. The parties agree that the Council can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Nevertheless, the appeal proposal would support the Government's

objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and would make a positive contribution to the housing choice in the Borough. The site lies within an acceptable location in principle for housing in the urban area of High Wycombe, and the proposal would reduce the pressure for development within a green field site. The site is within an accessible location that is served by public transport. Further, the proposal would contribute to the local economy in the long term, as a result of the occupants using local services and facilities, and there would be some economic benefits accrued from the construction process. However, as the proposal is for one dwelling, these benefits attract limited weight in favour of the development and do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

19. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

P Terceiro

INSPECTOR