



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2024

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/24/3340610

325A Bath Road, Slough, Berkshire SL1 5PR

- 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 R Forde against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is P/20349/000.
 - The development proposed is described as "convert existing loft space into habitable room & kitchen with ensuite and flat roof rear dormer and 2no Velux to front."
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for "convert existing loft space into habitable room & kitchen with ensuite and flat roof rear dormer and 2no Velux to front" at 325A Bath Road, Slough, Berkshire SL1 5PR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/20349/000, 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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan, Plan Reference Number: TQRQM23306134800500, dated 02 Nov 2023; Block Plan, Plan Reference Number TQRQM23299095739441, dated 26 Oct 2023; Drawing No. 02, dated 18/09/2023; and Drawing No. 04, dated 18/09/2023.
 4. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted, secure and covered parking for bicycles with minimum dimensions of 2 metres in length by 2 metres in height by 1 metre in width shall have been constructed or installed. Thereafter, the parking for bicycles shall be retained and maintained, available at all times for the parking of bicycles.
 5. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted, bin storage shall have been constructed or installed in accordance with details previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the bin storage shall be retained and maintained, available at all times for the storage of refuse.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposal on:

- the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area; and
- highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The A4 Bath Road is a principal road running through Slough. Along the section where the appeal property is located there are two junctions, one providing access to Burnham Lane and the other to the Bath Road Shopping Park. To accommodate the junctions the highway is 4-5 lanes wide with pavements either side and two pedestrian crossing points, which include central refuges. The area is largely dominated by the highway, junctions, and frequent movement of traffic.
4. Notwithstanding this, the width of the highway creates a sense of spaciousness and wide grass verges with large street trees running the perimeter of the Shopping Park add greenery to the street scene. In terms of the buildings and land uses along Bath Road, there is a mixture, ranging from large commercial buildings to modest residential dwellings. This makes the existing pattern of development and urban grain somewhat irregular.
5. The appeal property is an upper floor maisonette in one half of a semi-detached pair of houses. There is a similar pair of semi-detached houses adjacent, which also appear to have been converted to maisonettes. The buildings are set back from the Bath Road behind an access road, two sections of pavement and reasonably shallow frontages laid to lawn and hardstanding for parking. They have a simple form with traditional pitched roofs.
6. The two maisonette buildings are part of a group of several residential buildings located between the Mercedes-Benz Slough service centre and 337 Bath Road. The others appear to be detached and semi-detached single dwellinghouses. They vary in their form, features, and materials, but have a consistent scale of two storeys. The Mercedes-Benz Slough service centre is a similar scale to the dwellings. However, 337 and 339-341 Bath Road are three storeys in height. In terms of roof forms, the dwellings consist of a mixture of traditional hipped and pitched roofs, whereas the Mercedes-Benz Slough service centre has a flat roof and 337 and 339-341 Bath Road have mansard style roofs, which accommodate their third stories.
7. The appeal proposal includes a large rear dormer, which would not strictly accord with the guidelines set out in EX34 of the Slough Local Development Framework Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (2010) (SPD). Nonetheless, it would be set in from the edges of the roof and would not alter the existing side or top ridge lines. While the proposed rear dormer would be seen from the Bath Road through the gap between the maisonette buildings, it would not be highly visible within the street-scene and would retain the 2-storey scale. The proposed materials would be in keeping with the host building and the proposed windows, including the Juliet balcony, would broadly follow the existing pattern of fenestration. Given this, the

proposed dormer would appear as a roof extension, and would not be so large that it would dominate the residential building where the appeal property is located. Therefore, although it would not strictly accord with the specific guidelines set out in EX34 and EX37 of the SPD, it would accord with the fundamental design principles set out in DP1 and DP3 of the SPD.

8. I appreciate that the proposed rear dormer would be visible from the neighbouring properties and their plots. However, the surrounding context includes a variety of roof forms, including the flat roof of the Mercedes-Benz Slough service centre, as well as the mansard style roofs of 337 and 399-341 Bath Road, which have a box-like appearance. Given this, the proposed rear dormer would not look out of place or appear dominant from the rear.
9. Moreover, while many of the examples provided by the appellant do not have a comparable context to the appeal property and I afford them limited weight in my decision, the houses further along Bath Road, Nos 229 to 271, do. These houses, although a different style to the appeal property, are a short distance away and experienced from the Bath Road in a similar manner. I saw on site that several of these houses have large rear dormers, which, like the appeal property are visible through the gaps between them. Some of the dormers are not set in from the edges of the roof at all and have subsequently altered the existing side or top ridge lines of the properties. While I cannot be sure whether these rear dormers benefit from formal permission, they are a common characteristic that add to the character and appearance of houses along the Bath Road.
10. Accordingly, the proposal would be in keeping with the host building and would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore accord with Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006-2016 Development Plan Document (2008) (Core Strategy) and Policies EN1, EN2 and H15 of the Local Plan for Slough (2004) (Local Plan). These seek to ensure that development proposals reflect a high standard of design which is compatible with and/or improves their location and surroundings. Also, that extensions to existing dwelling houses do not have a significant adverse impact on the existing street scene.

Highway safety

11. There is no dispute between the parties that as a result of the appeal proposal the appeal property would require 2 off-street parking spaces.
12. I saw on my visit that there currently is some parking stress on the access road to the front of the maisonettes, with some vehicles choosing to park inconsiderately, for example on the pavement.
13. Nonetheless, the appeal property benefits from 1 off-street parking space to the front of the building and at least 1 off-street parking space to the rear of the building, accessed from a lane running between the buildings and through double gates into the rear garden space. This would accord with the advice set out at EX40 of the SPD.
14. While it was not clear whether the space to the front of the building strictly met the required 2.4 metre by 4.8 metre dimensions, at the time of my visit there was a medium-sized vehicle parked in this space, which was not impinging on the pavement or highway.

15. Furthermore, the appeal property is located close to local facilities and services, as well as within walking distance of Burnham Station. Occupants of the appeal property would therefore not be reliant on a private motor vehicle.
16. Overall, given the accessible location of the appeal property and that there would be an adequate amount of off-street parking for the appeal proposal, any risk that the proposal would increase the parking stress on the access road or result in vehicles obstructing the highway or pavement is limited. The appeal proposal would therefore not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. It would accord with Policy T2 of the Local Plan and Core Policy 7 of the Core Strategy, which seek to ensure that residential developments overcome road safety problems by, among other things, providing a level of parking provision appropriate to the location and the scale of the development.

Conditions

17. The Council has recommended 5 conditions be imposed, which I conclude on below. In imposing conditions, I have had regard to the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. I have accordingly modified the wording or form of certain conditions without altering their fundamental aims.
18. In addition to the statutory time limit condition, a condition specifying the plans that are approved and that the development shall be undertaken in accordance with them is required in the interests of certainty.
19. To protect the character and appearance of the area, a condition requiring the external materials match those used for the existing maisonette building is necessary. Also, for this reason, and to protect the living conditions of future and neighbouring occupants, a condition requiring the provision of adequate bin storage is necessary. The approved plans do not include any proposed bin storage, so I have removed this reference from the Council's suggested condition and added a requirement for the Local Planning Authority to agree the details in writing.
20. To encourage active and sustainable travel, a condition is also necessary to require the provision of secure and covered parking for bicycles.

Conclusion

21. I have found that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host building or the surrounding area. Neither would it compromise highway safety. It would therefore accord with the development plan read as a whole. It has not been demonstrated that there are any material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore allowed, subject to the conditions set out above.

Hannah Guest

INSPECTOR