



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2025

by **B Astley-Serougi BA(Hons) LLM MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/W/24/3348748

16A Kentwood Hill, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6DE

- 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 Hora Tevfik against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 240095.
 - The development proposed is side and rear extensions to 2no. existing flats to convert them into 2no. self-contained dwellinghouses.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant provided during the appeal process a Unilateral Undertaking, comments on correspondence and an email reiterating that the Appellant would not be engaging with the Council on a bilateral Section 106 agreement with the Council. I have accepted the submission of the Unilateral Undertaking because a completed and correctly executed obligation would have a legal effect. I have accepted the late evidence regarding comments on correspondence and emails regarding the Section 106 because I do not consider it to prejudice any interested parties.
3. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was issued on 12 December 2024. Whilst some paragraph numbers have changed, the relevant paragraphs and parts of paragraphs identified as directly affecting this case have not been amended. Therefore, in this case it has not been necessary to consult the parties on the revised Framework.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of 16A Kentwood Hill and the surrounding area; and
 - whether the proposal makes an adequate contribution to affordable housing provision.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The host property, 16A Kentwood Hill (No 16A) is located on the south east side of Kentwood Hill adjacent to a communal open space referred to as the Victoria Recreation Ground. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character. Many of the dwellings proximate to the appeal property have soft landscaped frontages adding to the pleasant character. This is further supported by the variety of gaps and spaces between the buildings on Kentwood Hill. The majority of properties proximate to the appeal site have a gap at first floor, which result in a pleasant rhythm to the built form and prevents a perception of overdevelopment. The appeal property forms part of a terrace and the front elevations of the terraced properties include bay windows which are a prominent characteristic of the dwellings.
6. The appeal scheme would introduce hardstanding to the frontage of the proposed development and to the existing dwelling frontage of No 16A to facilitate three vehicle parking spaces. It would leave limited space for any soft landscaping. The reliance upon this location for parking spaces would disrupt the prominence of the bay windows and create frontages dominated by parking.
7. There is minimal soft landscaping proposed to the frontages given the majority of the space would be used for parking. Whilst the appellant refers to the provision of trees, these would mainly be to the rear of the dwelling, with a proposed shrubbery located at the frontage of the plot. Whilst there are examples of parking provision to the frontages of other dwellings on Kentwood Hill, each case is determined on its own merits. I have identified above that the proposed parking provision would significantly harm the appreciation of the bay windows which are a prominent characteristic of the existing terrace. Furthermore, the width of the proposed development relative to the plot in conjunction with the frontage parking provision, would result in the proposed development appearing cramped.
8. Additionally, the space between No 16A and the boundary is limited. The proposed side extension would fill much of the existing gap, leaving a very narrow path leading to the rear. Consequently, due to the aforementioned characteristic gaps on Kentwood Hill, the infill of the existing gap at first floor level in particular would disrupt the rhythm of the streetscape. Moreover, the existing gaps provided at the end of the terrace prevent a large block of built form, which would be lost.
9. The appeal scheme would provide an entrance door on the side elevation of the property. The opposing end terrace (22 Kentwood Hill) has a front facing entrance door within a side porch arrangement. Consequently, the position of the proposed door on the side elevation of the proposed extension would not reflect and assimilate with the other entrance doors of the existing terraced dwellings.
10. The proposed roof would step into the site to reflect its tapered plan form. Albeit minor, this would harm the symmetry of the terraced roof design given that the opposing gable end does not include a step in. Consequently, the roof design would further disrupt the rhythm of built form on Kentwood Hill.
11. The appeal scheme would assimilate with the existing terrace in terms of the proposed height, materials, elevations and inclusion of bay windows in its design. Nevertheless, I have identified above that location of the proposed parking

provision would disrupt the rhythm of the terraced frontages in relation to the bay windows and the limited space for soft landscaping, the roof design would fail to fully assimilate with the opposing gable end of the terrace and the overall layout would be cramped.

12. In conclusion, whilst the appeal scheme may comply with some aspects of Policy H11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (RBLP) it remains in conflict with the overall policy insofar as it seeks, amongst other things, to ensure the layout of new residential development in private gardens integrates with the surrounding area and existing built form, including plot frontages and parking areas. It would also fail to comply with Policy CC7 of the RBLP which seeks to ensure, amongst other things that developments are of a high design quality which maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Affordable Housing

13. Policy H3 of the RBLP outlines the appropriate contribution towards affordable housing expected based on the number of dwellings on a site. The appeal scheme would be expected to provide a financial contribution equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided on the site as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. It establishes the following exemptions: replacement of a single dwelling with another single dwelling and the conversion of a dwelling to self-contained flats where there is no new floor space.
14. The appeal scheme would consist of the replacement of two flats with two houses. Therefore, it would not meet the criterion for either exception, considering the context provided by the SPD¹ referred to in the Council's decision notice, which states that 'there is no allowance for the replacement of existing dwelling units on a site'. Thus, a contribution towards affordable housing is required. The appellant has submitted a Unilateral Undertaking during the appeal process. However, it is incomplete given that, amongst other things, it does not provide a schedule for the provision of a sum of money to contribute to affordable housing in the Borough. Consequently, I attach no weight to the Unilateral Undertaking
15. Given the above, the proposed development does not make an adequate contribution to affordable housing provision. It therefore conflicts with Policy H3 of the RBLP, which seeks to ensure that development provides appropriate contribution towards securing appropriate affordable housing. Accordingly, for the same reasons, it also fails to accord with Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021.
16. The Council has referred to Policy CC9 of the RBLP in its decision notice. However, this is not determinative for this appeal given that the Policy relates to infrastructure exclusive of affordable housing.

Other Matters

17. The appellant in their statement of case has referred to the suitability of the *'proposed bungalow for a wheelchair user...and [that] the southerly orientation of the main pitched roof would also be suitable for installing solar panels, while the broad front garden is large enough to positively contribute to the conservation of fauna and flora'*. These comments do not correspond with the appeal scheme

¹ The Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, adopted March 2021

before me given that the proposed development is for two dwellinghouses and the respective frontages would be hardstanding. Consequently, they do not weigh in favour of the proposal.

18. The appellant highlights that the Council has not refused the appeal scheme on highway safety matters however this is a neutral factor in my determination of the appeal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

19. The appeal scheme would provide a highly needed dwelling size within the Borough however this does not justify the harm I have identified above that would occur as a result of the appeal scheme.
20. 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.

B Astley-Serougi

INSPECTOR