
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 August 2016

by Stephen Hawkins MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 21st September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/D/16/3154600

170 Pack Lane, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 5HR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr S Manzanero against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00385/HSE, dated 3 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as a two storey side and rear extension including new basement, new three bay garage and home office over and new front boundary wall and entrance gate.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since determining the application, the Council has adopted the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 2011-2029. Policy E1 of the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 1996-2011 has therefore been superseded.

Main Issues

3. These are as follows:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and that of the surrounding area.
 - The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of occupiers of adjoining residential property, having regard to outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The host dwelling is a modest sized chalet bungalow with a half-hipped roof at the front and rear. It retains a pleasant, period appearance and it is situated in a spacious plot. A high timber fence forms the boundary between the front garden and Pack Lane. A detached single garage is at the rear of the host dwelling, alongside the boundary with 168 Pack Lane. The appeal site is close to the busy signal controlled 'Fiveways' road junction. Development in the vicinity consists of dwellings of varying ages and styles, generally situated in spacious plots. In the Council's '*Urban Character Study for Basingstoke*' (UCS), the appeal site lies within the Fiveways character area, the key characteristics
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of which are described as including the 'steady spacious character', with roads that are 'generally open, due to the setback of the buildings from the highway... most of the enclosure along the road is provided by hedging and mature trees' and with 'mature trees and shrubs within the gardens...[that] form a green setting to the character area.'

5. The proposed extension to the west side of the host dwelling would be aligned with the front elevation. When viewed from the front it would be of a similar form and size to the host dwelling, having a similar width, eaves and ridge height. It would also be similar in terms of design and style to that of the host dwelling. Whilst this extension would therefore echo the appearance of the host dwelling, due to its overall size and bulk it would nevertheless be seen from the street as a very substantial addition, which would compete visually with the host dwelling in terms of scale and would lack any sense of being a subordinate addition.
6. The new garage and first floor office extension would be on the other side of the host dwelling, on part of the appeal site including the area currently occupied by the existing garage. Amendments were made during the Council's consideration of the application, which included reducing the size of the garage. However, this extension would still be much longer, with a substantially higher eaves and overall height than the structure it would replace, due to the incorporation of the first floor. The overall height would be only slightly below that of the host dwelling. The eaves level would be above the main eaves of the host dwelling. Consequently, this extension would be viewed as very substantial, effectively two storey addition to the host dwelling from the street. Although it would be in a set back location towards the rear of the host dwelling, due to its overall scale this extension would also not appear as a subordinate addition.
7. I acknowledge that both extensions would use similar materials to the host dwelling and that there are larger properties in the locality. I have taken the appellant's requirements for a garage of sufficient size to accommodate his vintage cars and for a separate home office, as well as the support for the extensions from a neighbouring resident and the proposed improvements to the Fiveways junction, into account. I have also taken account of the dwelling at 172 Pack Lane, which I understand was originally a garage converted around ten years ago and which has subsequently been substantially extended. However, the proposals at that property would have been considered on their individual merits. I did not observe any significant similarities between No 172 and the appeal scheme.
8. Consequently, both individually and as a result of the accumulation of their overall size and bulk, I find that the extensions would be very substantial additions which would fail to properly respect and reflect the scale and proportions of the host dwelling. As a result, the host dwelling would be unduly dominated in views in the street scene by the scale of later additions. It follows that the extensions would not achieve an appropriate level of subordination to the host dwelling and they would significantly erode its existing character and appearance.
9. Furthermore, the extensions would enlarge the host dwelling such that it would be in proximity to the plot boundaries on both sides. This would significantly reduce the existing sense of space about the host dwelling, giving the appeal

site the appearance of being more built up at two storeys across the majority of its width. In turn, this would create a much greater sense of enclosure by built form in the street scene, resulting in a more urban feel which would be entirely at odds with the generally open and spacious characteristics of residential development in the surroundings, identified in the UCS.

10. The proposed new boundary wall and entrance gates would replace the existing timber fence, which the Council says does not have planning permission. During my visit, I noted that as a rule boundary enclosures at the front of properties along Pack Lane consists of hedges, with some low walls and fencing also found in the locality. Even so, there are occasional instances of higher boundary enclosures including high brick walls and fencing, especially around the Fiveways junction and on Pack Lane east of the appeal site. The height, design and location of the proposed wall and gates would not be dissimilar to other examples of such development found in the locality. As a consequence, the proposed wall and gates would not appear significantly at odds with the existing character of the area when viewed from the street.
11. Nevertheless, I find that the overall effect of the proposed development would be to cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the proposed development would fail to accord with Policy EM10 of the adopted Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 (LP), as it would not be of high quality, based on a robust design-led approach and it would not positively contribute to local distinctiveness, the sense of place and the existing street scene, taking into account the relevant Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the local character and distinctiveness of the area as identified in the UCS. Further, it would not have due regard to the appearance of the surrounding area and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture.
12. The proposed development would also therefore be inconsistent with the guidance in the Council's adopted Design and Sustainability SPD at Appendix 13 '*Extending your Home and Replacement Dwellings*', on 'Design and Appearance' at (a) as it would be overly large in size and scale and disproportionate in relation to the original house and 'The Street Scene' at (b) due to the failure to respect the gaps between buildings. Consequently, the proposed development would also be inconsistent with the requirement for high quality design in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) at Section 7.
13. The Council have also referred to a conflict with the UCS. However, that document appears to be a study of the existing characteristics of the area which is used to inform the consideration of development proposals. I have therefore been unable to determine any conflict between the proposed development and the objectives of the UCS.

Living conditions

14. The appeal site is adjoined to the west by an area of open space adjacent to the road junction. No 168 to the east is therefore the only neighbouring residential property that would be significantly affected by the proposed development.
15. The new garage and office extension would be sited in a similar position to existing garage, close to the boundary with No 168. As noted above, this

extension would be much longer, with a substantially higher eaves and overall height than the existing garage. The extension would also project some distance beyond the rear wall of No 168 and it is sited at a slightly higher ground level.

16. Even so, the height and massing of the side elevation of this extension would have only a limited effect on the level of outlook currently enjoyed by the occupiers of No 168. It would also not cause any unacceptable loss of light or overshadowing or create significantly more enclosed feel in comparison with the existing garage. In part, this is because of the design of the roof of the extension which would slope away into the appeal site and would also be hipped at the rear. This would minimise its overall bulk when viewed from No 168. Principally however, it is because the dwelling at No 168 is sited well away from the boundary, it has large windows in its rear elevation and it is set in a deep and spacious, south facing rear garden. The above factors all significantly assist in offsetting the impact of this extension on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 168 in terms of outlook and light.
17. Therefore, the proposed development would not fail to accord with Policy EM10 of the LP, as it would provide a high quality of amenity for occupants of neighbouring properties having regard to access to natural light and outlook and it would be consistent with the guidance in the Council's SPD concerning the effect of extensions on neighbouring property. Consequently, the proposed development would be consistent with the Framework at paragraph 17 in respect of securing a good standard of amenity for existing occupants.

Conclusion

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

Stephen Hawkins

INSPECTOR