
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2016

By Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

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

Decision date: 1 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/16/3156616

Orchard Cottage, Pursers Lane, Peaslake, Guildford GU5 9RG

- 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 Miss Suzannah Cooley against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 16/P/00635 dated 24 March 2016 , was refused by notice dated 25 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is replacement of porch and rear flat roof with pitched roof. Replacement of single storey garage with two storey side extension
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement of porch and rear flat roof with pitched roof; replacement of single storey garage with two storey side extension at Orchard Cottage, Pursers Lane, Peaslake, Guildford GU5 9RG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 16/P/00635 dated 24 March 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: GP/1411/A/R9.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - 1) Whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and any relevant development plan policies; and
 - 2) Its effect on the character and appearance of the local area, with particular regard to its location within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value.

Reasons

Issue a) Inappropriate development

3. The appeal property is a detached two storey dwelling with an attached flat roofed garage to the side. The property is set back from Pursers Lane, with the majority of its garden to the front. It is sited within a linear group of properties on the west side of the road within the Green Belt and outside of an identified settlement. It also lies within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).
4. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) sets out the government's planning policies to secure sustainable development. One of its core planning principles at Paragraph 17, as amplified later in the Framework, includes *protecting the Green Belts*. Paragraph 87 confirms that *inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*. Paragraph 89 sets out that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate except for a limited number of exceptions including the extension or alteration of a building providing that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The Framework does not define further the term 'disproportionate'.
5. The Council's refusal notice also refers to Policies RE2 and H9 of the adopted Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (Local Plan). I have noted the date of the Local Plan but in so far as the policies are consistent with the Framework, I have taken them into account. Policy RE2 sets out that new building will be deemed inappropriate except for a specified list, including limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings and cross refers to Policies H6 and H9. Policy H9 relates to extensions to dwellings within the countryside and sets out a criteria based approach, with an additional part of the policy in relation to buildings within the Green Belt, where there is a presumption against extensions which result in disproportionate additions taking into account the size of the original dwelling. The supporting text sets out guidance on how the Council will consider this matter and indicates that original building means the dwelling as existing on 1 July 1948 (or as first built after that date). The text indicates that it is not considered appropriate to seek to define a maximum size for extensions but that the principal consideration will be the potential impact of the extension on the openness of the Green Belt and its visual amenities.
6. The Council has calculated that the proposed extensions would result in a 53.6% increase over the original, noting that the original dwelling has had a previous extension in the form of a first floor rear extension, porch addition and a side garage. The Appellant has not contended this figure and I have no reason to take a different view. However, I also agree with the Council that this calculation is not on its own conclusive.
7. The proposed porch would replace the existing porch and would be of similar dimensions but would incorporate a pitched roof rather than a flat roof. The existing flat roofed garage would be replaced with a deeper extension with a pitched roof including a dormer window to provide accommodation at first floor level. The flat roof to the rear at first floor level would be replaced with a double pitch and valley roof.

8. Taken individually and together, the proposed additions would inevitably add to the overall built form of the property. However, they would, in my view, only marginally increase the footprint of built development on the site and each element would be modest in terms of the additional bulk and scale it would add to the property. The set back of the side extension from the front elevation of the house and its limited width, as well as lower eaves and ridge height in relation to the main roof would ensure that this element would appear as a very modest addition to the main house. Similarly, the porch, given its proportions, would continue to be a small protrusion and the form of the rear roof with its double pitch and valley would not, in my view, add significantly to the overall roof form.
9. Given their modest forms, I do not consider that the proposals, taking all of the individual elements together, and taking account of the other additions already undertaken, would appear as a disproportionate addition over the size of the 'original' property. The proposals would not, in my view, harm the openness of the Green Belt.
10. Taking these factors together and in the particular circumstances of this case, it is my conclusion that the proposed development would not be inappropriate development for the purposes of the Framework and development plan policy. There is therefore no need for the development to be justified by special circumstances.

Issue b) Character and Appearance

11. I consider that the proposed extensions and alterations, given their proportions including roof form as well as layout and appearance would relate appropriately to the character and appearance of the existing property. They would not, in my view, materially affect the relationship of the property with its plot and surroundings.
12. The property is part of small linear group of properties along the valley with open countryside to the rear and on the opposite side of the road. I do not consider that there would be any material change in the relationship between the built development along this part of Pursers Lane and the surrounding open countryside. As a result there would be no harm to the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and the distinctive landscape of the AGLV.
13. I am therefore satisfied that there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the local area, with particular regard to the siting of the property within the AONB and AGLV. There would as result be no conflict with the Framework or Policies RE5, RE6 and H9 of the Local Plan, all of which seek a high quality of design which respects the value of the landscape.

Conditions

14. I agree with the Council that in the interests of protecting the appearance and character of the local area, a condition should be imposed to require the materials for the proposed development to match the existing building. I have also added a condition to specify the approved plan for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including in representations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR