

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/R3650/D/16/3154879

Bealeswood Cottage, Bealeswood Lane, Dockenfield, Farnham, GU10 4HS

- 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 J Shaw against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref:WA/2016/0757 dated 8 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is single and two storey extensions and alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area, with particular regard to its countryside location within an Area of Great Landscape Value.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached property on the north side of Bealeswood Lane and within the open countryside. There are a scattering of individual dwellings along the lane set amongst open countryside and woodland. Beyond the appeal property, Bealeswood Lane narrows in width with no further access for vehicles. The lane is also a bridleway. The site is within the countryside beyond the Green Belt and is also within an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).
4. Policy RD2 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 (Local Plan) is a criteria based policy relating to extensions to dwellings in the countryside. Criterion a) requires that extensions do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling. The supporting text indicates how the Council will consider this first criterion and indicates that a proposal which individually or cumulatively (with earlier extensions) increases the floorspace of the original dwelling (defined as it existed on 31 December 1968 when the policy was first introduced) by more than 40% is unlikely to satisfy the requirement relating to disproportionate additions.
5. There is a dispute between the Appellant and the Council over the precise floorspace figures, although even using the lower figure provided by the

Appellant, the additions would result in a 90% increase in the floorspace over and above the size of the original dwelling. This would significantly exceed the guideline of 40% set out in the supporting text to Policy RD2. However, I have noted that a certificate of lawfulness granted in 2009 for extensions which could be built using permitted development rights (WA/2009/0742) and a more recent permission for extensions (WA/2016/0044) would result in similar, or slightly higher, absolute increases in floorspace over and above the size of the 'original' dwelling.

6. However, the increase in floorspace, taken on its own, is only one consideration under Policy RD2 and is not necessarily conclusive, taken in isolation of the other criteria, of the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area. I now turn to consider the other criteria under Policy RD2 which specifically refer to the effect of a proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling and local area.
7. The dwelling, as existing, has been previously extended but with its differing roof heights and range of lower projections, retains a modest character and appearance in terms of scale and building mass. The proposal would extend the dwelling with both single and two storey additions together with substantial remodelling works. The scale of the additions and in particular the extension of the main roof to full ridge height across the extended property would result in a much bulkier and more visually intrusive building. It is my view that the scale of the extensions and alterations proposed would overwhelm and harm the more modest character and appearance of the property as existing.
8. The property, as extended, and as a result of its increased bulk and massing and in particular through its extended roof form, would also become a more visually intrusive building which would be over dominant in the rural landscape, including in views along Bealeswood Lane. Along Bealeswood Lane, which is also a public bridleway, there would be glimpsed and more open views of the extended property and in these views the property would appear much bulkier and more dominant in the rural landscape.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area, with particular regard to its countryside location within an AGLV. This would conflict with The National Planning Policy Framework as well as Policies C2, C3 and RD2 of the Local Plan all of which seek to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the valued landscapes within it.
10. The Appellant has provided me with the scheme plans showing the extensions which could be undertaken through permitted development rights and for which the 2009 certificate of lawfulness has been granted. However, I consider that the proposal before me would result in a bulkier and more visually prominent building compared with this alternative scheme. In that scheme, the introduction of dormers together with a number of other two storey and single storey additions to the property would, in my view, be more in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and would be less bulky and visually intrusive. The existence of the certificate of lawfulness for these extensions does not therefore persuade me that the current proposals should be permitted given the harm I have concluded.

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR