

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2017

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 24 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/16/3163776

12 Liddington Hall Drive, Guildford, GU3 3AE

- 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 Alan Strank against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/01541, dated 19 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is part two storey and part single storey side extension and front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for part two storey and part single storey side extension and front porch at 12 Liddington Hall Drive, Guildford, GU3 3AE, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/P/01541, dated 19 July 2016, and the plans submitted with it, 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 plans: RB/LH/PL01, RB/LH/PL02 and RB/LH/PL03.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building.

Main issues

2. I consider that the main issues in this case are a) whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, b) its effect on the openness of the Green Belt and on the character and appearance of the area, and c) if it is inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

Inappropriate development

3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out several categories of new buildings which are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt as does policy RE2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (the

local plan). Both allow for the extension or alteration of an existing building, and the Framework and local plan policy H9 further make clear that such extensions should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

4. The Framework does not provide any direction as to what may be regarded as a disproportionate addition, nor does it indicate how this should be measured, for example, by floor space or volume. The supporting text for policy H9 states that it is not desirable to state categorically what maximum size of extension is permissible other than the general requirement that it should not result in disproportionate additions taking account of the size of the original building. Small extensions, even where there have been previous extensions may be acceptable.
5. 12 Liddington Hall Drive is a two storey semi-detached house located in a semi-rural location to the west of and outside the settlement boundary of Guildford, within the Green Belt. Development in the street is of similar properties set back from the road along the west side, with woodland and open fields to the east. Liddington New Road to the west is a street with similar two storey mainly semi-detached houses along both sides. The house was extended in the 1980s with a two storey side addition and in the 1990s with a front porch.
6. The appeal proposal is for a two storey side extension, replacing an existing garage and a lean-to link between the latter and the house at ground floor level and providing a bathroom and enlarged bedroom at first floor level. It is a revised scheme following refusal of a previous one for a two storey extension including a larger floor area at first floor level.
7. The extension would be stepped slightly back from the front building line of the house with its roof stepped down slightly from the main ridge level and hipped to match the existing. It would be narrower than the existing garage and lean-to link and at ground floor level would extend most of the length of the flank wall at ground floor level. At first floor level it would extend from the front approximately two thirds of the length of the flank wall. The main increase in size would therefore be contained in the first floor element.
8. The Council states that the proposed extension, together with the alteration to the front porch and previous extensions would amount an increase of around 51% in floor area compared to the original dwelling. In my opinion, this would not result in a disproportionate increase in the overall size of the original building, taking account of the additional volume and form of the extension rather than simply its floor area, and the fact that it would replace the existing structure of the garage and lean-to.
9. The pattern of development along the street is of semi-detached houses with hipped roofs set out in plots of a size which have allowed for extension sideways without appearing cramped or out of scale with either the buildings themselves or the general street scene. In this context, the proposal would integrate well with the existing house and would not be disproportionate.
10. I conclude that the proposal would not be inappropriate development and that it would be consistent with the Framework and local plan policies RE2 and H9.

Openness

11. The Framework states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. The appeal property, together with the others along the same side of the street, has an established residential character with regular good spacing between the houses. This allows for views through to the gardens and properties behind and provides some sense of openness. A greater sense of openness is apparent on the opposite side of the road, where there is a mix of open fields and woodland. Some of the houses have been extended by two storeys at the side and these appear well integrated with the original houses without significantly eroding the openness of the street scene.
12. In my opinion, the proposal would not erode the openness of the Green Belt because it would be a relatively modest increase in the width of the house at first floor level, balanced by a reduction in width at ground floor level. It would not compromise any of the purposes for which the Green Belt is designated including that of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Character and appearance

13. The proposal would be constructed in materials to match the existing house and the design would be in keeping with its scale and character, maintaining the hipped roof and general design details. I conclude that it would not harm the character and appearance of the building itself or the surrounding area and that it would be in accordance with local plan policy H9.
14. In determining this appeal, I have taken account of the other properties in the area which have been extended. In general, these appear to have been successful in reflecting the original character of the houses and in maintaining the open appearance of the street. The proposal would be similar in character and appearance to these other properties and, in my opinion, would appear well integrated into the surroundings.
15. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

Conditions

16. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council, having regard to the tests set out in the Framework. A condition detailing the plans is necessary to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and for the avoidance of doubt. A condition relating to the materials is necessary in order to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development.
17. I am not satisfied that the condition relating to the removal of permitted development rights is necessary or reasonable in this case since the Council's reason appears to relate to new dwellings, and as the property is an established dwelling, I am not persuaded that the proposed extension would result in the site as a whole posing a greater risk to the character of the area or to the amenities of adjoining properties from further alterations than the existing house.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR