

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2017

by Kevin Gleeson BA MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 30 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/16/3164153

4 Orchard Mains, Woking GU22 0ET

- 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 Mohammed Akbar against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2016/0838, dated 15 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and rear and a single storey front and rear extension with a new detached double garage following the demolition of the existing single garage on the side of the dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The application was refused taking account of relevant development plan policies at that time including saved policies in the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999. The Local Plan has now been superseded with the adoption of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) in October 2016.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two storey detached house with an adjoining single garage. It is located on a large plot with an extensive rear and side garden which is lower than the neighbouring rear gardens of 1-3 Orchard Mains. The proposed development would extend the property to the side and rear, following the demolition of the existing garage which would be replaced with a new detached double garage to the front of the property.
 5. Orchard Mains is a cul-de-sac where the majority of properties are similar in form, being large detached dwellings. The form of the appeal property is similar to many others although its location means that it is not set alongside similar house types. No. 5 Orchard Mains is very different in form, being a bungalow and being set back from the frontage. Consequently the character of the immediate area encompassing Wych Hill House and nos. 4 and 5 Orchard
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Mains is more open and spacious than the remainder of the cul-de-sac. Opposite the appeal site, 6-8 Orchard Mains are of a similar form to the appeal property.

6. Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (the Core Strategy), 2012 seeks to ensure that new development creates buildings and places which are attractive and make a positive contribution to the street scene and character of the area, paying due regard to scale and proportions among other factors.
7. The Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 2015 advises that residential extensions should demonstrate that the additional mass respects the building's proportions, symmetry and balance. It also states that an extension should not result in an unbalanced or disproportionate frontage and that the design of front elevations is particularly important in terms of the visual impact, with a preference for the extension to be a subsidiary building element.
8. Policy BE1 of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Plan (the Neighbourhood Plan), 2015 requires new development to reflect the character of nearby buildings and the wider character of the street scene.
9. The appellant accepts that the proposal would result in a substantial increase in the size and scale of the existing house. The extension would almost double the length of the frontage at first floor level and therefore would be a significant addition which would fail to respect the scale and proportions of the existing building.
10. The proposed development has been designed to reflect features of the existing building and in terms of roof pitch, materials and fenestration this has been achieved. The appellant also argued that the additional development would balance the property within its plot and would more fully utilise a development site within an established residential area. However these considerations do not outweigh the harm arising from the extensive additions to the existing building which by virtue of their scale, bulk and massing I consider to be disproportionate and over dominant and would not be a subsidiary building element.
11. The proposed double garage would be located to the front of the existing dwelling. The dense vegetation on the boundary with Wych Hill House would be partially obscured by the proposed garage block such that the softer landscape character in this part of the road would be diminished.
12. With the exception of no. 5, detached garages in front of properties are uncharacteristic in Orchard Mains. Moreover, guidance in the SPD indicates that garages are usually best set back from the main building frontage. In this case no adequate justification has been provided as to why the guidance should not be complied with. By virtue of its size and location the proposed garage would be a prominent element in the street scene and out of character with the surrounding area.
13. The gap between the existing garage and the boundary fence is approximately 6 metres. The removal of the single storey garage and its replacement with a two storey side extension would reduce the gap to the boundary to between approximately 2.4 to 2.7 metres. Other properties within Orchard Mains have smaller gaps between neighbouring properties than that which would remain

were the appeal scheme to go ahead. The extension to 7 Orchard Mains, to which the appellant has drawn my attention, demonstrates that narrow distances between properties may be acceptable. However, with the appeal scheme the gap to the boundary would not be readily apparent because the proposed double garage would partly obscure it. Consequently, whilst maintaining a degree of separation from its boundaries, particularly because of the position of the proposed garage, the site would appear cramped.

14. Whilst the location of the appeal property at the end of the cul-de-sac and on lower ground than neighbouring properties would assist in reducing the visual impact of the development it would still be visible within the street scene. I consider that the scale and location of the proposed garage together with the scale of the proposed extension would mean that the development would not sit comfortably within its plot and would be detrimental to the open character of this part of Orchard Mains.
15. I therefore find that the proposed development would be contrary to Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy, the Design SPD and Policy BE1 of the Neighbourhood Plan in that it would adversely affect the character of the host property and surrounding area. By virtue of its size and scale the proposal would fail to pay appropriate regard to the character and appearance of the local area and neighbouring buildings or to make a positive contribution to the street scene.
16. The proposals would also fail to address the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which advises that planning permission should be refused for development of poor quality that fails to respond to local character or take opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area.
17. The appellant makes reference to Policy DM10 of the DPD. This addresses development on garden land and does not appear to deal specifically with extensions to existing residential properties. Consequently I do not regard it as relevant to this case.

Other Matters

18. The appellant identified the desire to extend the family house for a growing family in support of the proposal. However, this does not outweigh the harm which would arise from the proposed development.
19. I have taken account of the submissions made by other parties in relation to a number of issues. These include concerns about parking and loss of outlook. However, these matters do not alter the conclusions I have reached based on the main issue in this case.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Kevin Gleeson

INSPECTOR