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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2017

**by Mike Fox BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017.**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/D/17/ 3166847**

**61 Oakhill Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5LE**

- 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 I Philpott against the decision of Horsham District Council.
  - The application Ref DC/16/2317, dated 6 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2016.
  - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing garage and construction of a new two storey rear and side extension with a single storey extension to the front and internal re-modelling.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the demolition of the existing garage and construction of a new two storey rear and side extension with a single storey extension to the front and internal re-modelling at 61 Oakhill Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5LE in accordance with the terms of application Ref DC/16/2317, dated 6 October 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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those in the existing building.
  - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, all prefaced TM003: 01 P1 *Location and Block Plan*; 02 P1 *Elevation and Floor Plan*; 03 P1 *Floor Plan*; and 04 P1 *Elevation Plan*.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area; and on the living conditions of occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings, with particular regard to outlook.

### Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey, brick built detached dwelling with a pitched, tiled roof. The local streetscene comprises a variable mixture of

properties, styles and periods, including detached, semi-detached and terraced housing.

### *Character and appearance*

4. The Council expresses concern that the proposed extensions, which would wrap around the front, south-east side and back of the original building, would more than double the original floorspace of the house; that the resulting narrow gap between the appeal property and the next door house at no. 63 to the south-east would be too narrow and create a terracing effect; and that the existing building line at the front of the property would be breached. It argues, on the basis of these considerations, that the proposal would appear cramped and alien to the character and appearance of the original dwelling and the surrounding area.
5. Policy 33 of the Council's adopted District Planning Framework (DPF) requires developments to ensure their scale, massing and appearance is of a high standard of design, relating sympathetically with the built surroundings, being locally distinctive in character, and using high standards of materials, finishes and landscaping. The Council's design guidance also advises that front extensions should generally be avoided whilst side extensions should appear as a smaller element when viewed against the main house; they should have pitched roofs and lower ridge lines; and to avoid a terracing effect, a one metre gap should normally be retained between the extension and the site boundary.
6. The proposed design, detailing and use of external materials would match the character and appearance of the existing building. The front elevation would be subservient to the width of the original property and the pitched roof would have a slightly lower ridge line than on the host property. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not be alien to the character and appearance of the original house.
7. Turning to the streetscene, I consider that the proposal would not appear out of place in its context. The modest outward extension of the building line would not be out of place in a street which has examples of protruding building lines located just a few doors down from the appeal property. Given also the proximity of terraced properties to the south-east and also directly opposite, a small gap between the proposed extension and the site boundary would not be out of place within the streetscene.
8. Finally, the rear extension would approximately line up with the back building line of the next door dwelling at no 59 to the north-west, which would not appear untoward. The property also has a long and sizeable back garden, and the rear extension would not appear cramped in relation to the size of the plot.
9. On the first main issue, I conclude, on the basis of the above considerations, that the proposed development would not be alien to or dominate the host property or its immediate context, either in the streetscene or when viewed from the rear. As such it would accord with the general design principles of national policy, as expressed in section 7 of *the Framework*<sup>1</sup>, and it would not be contrary to the design thrust of policy 33 of the Council's DPF. It would also comply with the requirement in this policy for development to make efficient

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<sup>1</sup> DCLG: National Planning Policy Framework (*the Framework*); March 2012.

use of the land, and I consider that the proposal has achieved this objective without being dominant or appearing 'cramped'.

#### *Living conditions*

10. The Council is concerned that the proposal would harm the outlook through creating a 'tunnelling' effect on the occupiers of the next door property, no. 59, to the north-west, and have an overbearing impact on the outlook of the occupiers of both next door properties. The gap between the proposed rear extension and no. 59 would be the same as at present, albeit continued further back. It would be as wide or wider than several other gaps between dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the appeal property and would not in my judgment result in unacceptable loss of outlook to the occupiers of either no. 59 or 53.
11. The lack of windows on the south-east side of the extension clearly reflects the Appellant's intention to respect the privacy of his neighbours and I am not persuaded that the property would not be adequately served in this regard.
12. In the light of the above considerations I conclude on the second main issue that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of either of the next door occupiers or future occupiers of the appeal property. As such the proposal would not be contrary to policy 33 of the Council's DPF or paragraph 17[4] of *the Framework*.

#### **Conditions**

13. The Council has not suggested any additional conditions to those which appear in the standard questionnaire, and neither do I. In addition to the standard time condition and the condition referring to the approved plans, condition (2) is to safeguard the character and appearance of the area.

#### **Conclusion**

14. I have found that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the existing house or the streetscene, and that it would not significantly harm the living conditions of the occupiers of the next door properties or future occupiers of the appeal property. It would therefore accord with national policy and the Council's DPF. For the reasons given and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

*Mike Fox*

INSPECTOR