
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2017

By Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

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

Decision date: 13th February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/16/3164363

28 Cressex Close, Binfield, Bracknell, RG42 4DR

- 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 Daniel and Mrs Kelly Howe against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 16/00451/FUL dated 10 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is front and side extensions, rebuilding of garage with conversion to habitable space, new roof with habitable accommodation and associated parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The plans were amended at the application stage, and my decision is based on the revised plans which were determined by the Council.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - a) the effect of the proposal on the street scene, and
 - b) the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the neighbouring residents at No 29 Cressex Close.

Reasons

Issue a) Street Scene

4. The appeal property is a detached bungalow within a cul de sac and within a small group of well spaced bungalows of similar scale and massing. A number have garages set back to the side which adds to the sense of spacing between the bungalows. The land rises from north to south so that the properties appear to step up the hill towards the end of the cul de sac.
5. The proposal would extend the width of the property at the front towards the southern boundary adjoining No 27. It would raise and extend the roof and change its shape from a simple gable to a part pitched and part gable frontage at the front and gable under a part pitched and part flat roof at the rear, with

the addition of a gable to the pitched roof along the north facing side elevation. The existing garage would be rebuilt as habitable space with a flat roof and a porch added to the front under a pitched roof.

6. Although the proposal would reduce the eaves height to the main roof, the extended width of the property together with the increase in the roof height and change in the roof form would add substantially to the overall bulk and massing of the property. It would also reduce the spacing between the appeal property and the property on its southern side, towards the front of the property. The change to the roof forms and in particular the overall increase in the height of the roof would also disrupt the existing stepped appearance of the properties up the hillside. As a result of all these issues, in street scene views, the property as extended would be visually intrusive and over prominent and detract from the character and appearance of the local area.
7. The Appellants have referred to the larger blocks of flats at the entrance to Cressex Close, but because of the bend in the road, they do not, in street scene views, form part of the distinctive group of bungalows, which includes the appeal property. There are two main designs to the bungalows within the group, albeit a number have been extended and altered. The Appellants have contended that the proposal would amend the design from the current gable at the front and rear and a roof ridge which runs from front to back to be more in keeping with those bungalows where the ridge runs across the width of the property, including at No.27. However, I consider that the proposed design would be an uncomfortable mix of styles and would be over dominant in relation to the adjoining properties. It would not complement the modest scale and design of the surrounding properties.
8. I therefore conclude the proposed development would harm the street scene. This would conflict with Policy CS7 of the adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Policy EN20 of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (Local Plan), Policy BF1 of the Binfield Neighbourhood Plan (Neighbourhood Plan) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), all of which seek, amongst other things, for new development to be of a high quality of design which respects the local context. The Council's decision notice also refers to the Council's Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, but it is not clear to me the manner in which the proposal conflicts with this document.

Issue b) Living Conditions

9. The neighbouring property on the northern side has two windows which appear to serve habitable rooms facing towards the appeal property. I understand that one is a secondary window to a living room whilst the other is the only window to serve a bedroom. The Council has acknowledged that the appeal property, as existing, adversely affects the light to the side window serving the bedroom. I have noted the Appellants' contentions regarding the benefits to the living conditions of the neighbours at No 29 as a result of the proposed reduction of the eaves height of the main roof. However, from the information before me and my site visit, I agree with the Council that the proposed change in built form along this elevation would exacerbate the harm through loss of light and would also be over bearing and would result in a loss of outlook for the neighbours, particularly from this side facing room.

10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would unacceptably harm the living conditions of the neighbours at No 29 Cressex Close, through loss of light and loss of outlook. This would conflict with Policy EN20 of the Local Plan and Policy BF1 of the Neighbourhood Plan as well as one of the Core Planning Principles set out at paragraph 17 of the Framework, all of which seek to ensure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings.

11. The Appellants have offered to accept a condition to require obscure glazing to the new window and roof lights facing towards No 29, but this would not overcome the harm I have concluded from loss of light and loss of outlook.

Conclusion

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

L J Evans

INSPECTOR