

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2017

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/D/16/3161438

Delmont, Dell Orchard, Winchmore Hill, Amersham, HP7 0PJ.

- 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 Douglas Johnson against the decision of Chiltern District Council.
 - The application Ref CH/2016/1404/FA dated 25 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed demolition of existing rear porch and detached garage and construction of double-storey side extension and front porch, including new parking/turning area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the pair of dwellings and the locality, which is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

3. The Appeal site is located within a rural settlement that is characterised by an eclectic mix of single storey, chalet and two storey dwellings of various sizes, types and ages. The site is accessed via a narrow drive which serves several single and two storey dwellings and which is located to the rear of the dwellings fronting Fagnall Lane. The Appeal dwelling is one of a pair of semi-detached bungalows which were originally symmetrically designed. Both dwellings have been extended and whilst they are no longer symmetrical, they have retained their modest proportions and sense of uniformity.
 4. The Appeal site is situated within a residential area where, in accordance with policy GB5 of the Adopted Chiltern District Local Plan (Local Plan), in principle new residential development is acceptable. It states that the siting, scale and appearance of dwellings should be compatible with other dwellings in the locality. It is noted that the Council refer to policy GB4 rather than policy GB5 in their report. However, it is assumed that this was done in error as both policies are similarly worded and policy GB4 does not affect the Appeal site.
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5. Together and amongst other things the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), policies GC1, H13 & H15 of the Local Plan and policy CS20 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District (Core Strategy) require new development to be designed to a high standard and add to the quality of the area. Dwellings should be in scale with their built and natural surroundings and extensions should be in keeping with and respect the scale and proportions of the host buildings. The Councils Residential Extensions and Householder Development – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has similar objectives.
6. Within AONB’s policy LSQ1 of the Local Plan and policy CS22 of the Core Strategy state that the primary objective is to preserve and enhance their natural beauty, landscape value and their high scenic quality. Development should be consistent with these objectives. The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
7. The existing dwelling on the Appeal site comprises a traditionally designed modest height bungalow with an uncluttered gable roof. It has the appearance of a small rural bungalow which respects and contributes to its rural surroundings.
8. Due to its combined width, height and forward/rear projections the proposed extension would dominate the front and rear elevations of the host dwelling. The scale, proportions and detailing of the proposed extension are suburban and would fail to respect or reflect the modest traditional scale of the host dwelling. As a consequence it would be contrary to the advice set out in the SPD. The SPD advises that the roofs of extensions should be of a style which matches the original roof and disjointed roof forms should be avoided. Side extensions should integrate with the existing building and respect the existing proportions of the host dwelling.
9. The harm that would be caused by the proposed extension to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its sensitive rural surroundings would outweigh the benefits for the Appellant and his family that would result from the proposed additional accommodation. This harm could not be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of conditions.
10. It is acknowledged that planning permission has already been granted for a side extension to the property. However the approved scheme is more modest in height and size. It respects the proportions and appearance of the host dwelling, particularly when viewed from Dell Orchard. As such it is not directly comparable to the Appeal scheme. Similarly, whilst there are other two storey dwellings in the locality, they do not comprise modest rural bungalows with bulky side extensions. Rather than set a precedent they serve to highlight the need to assess each proposal on its merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies.
11. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host building and the locality. It would therefore conflict with policies GC1, LSQ1, GB5, H13 & H15 of the Local Plan, policies CS20 & CS22 of the Core Strategy, the NPPF and the SPD.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR