

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2017

by Timothy C King (BA Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 3 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/D/17/3166860

Barnfield, West End Lane, Medstead, Alton, GU34 5QA

- 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 & Mrs S Cross against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 24396/004, dated 19 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is '*Alterations and extension to existing property.*'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a part two-storey, part first floor extension to side, and a single-storey side extension to the opposite flank at Barnfield, West End Lane, Medstead, Alton, GU34 5QA, in accordance with the terms of the application ref 24396/004 dated 19 September 2016, 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: Drawing Nos. D1603 Rev 08, 705BF01, D1603 04, D1603 05, D1603 06, D1603 07, 705BF200(1), 705BF200(2), 705BF300(1), 705BF300(2) and 705BF400.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matter

2. I have expanded the proposal's description to better focus on the development involved.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - the effect of the proposal on housing choice; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
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Reasons

Housing Choice

4. The appeal dwelling is a detached dwelling set within a large plot of land. Located outside of any Settlement Policy Boundary the dwelling is somewhat isolated and is also set back considerably from its access lane. Policy H16 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review (LPSR), adopted in 2006, allows dwellings of this size to be extended by up to 50% over its original floor area. In this instance, taking into account previous additions to the dwelling, the proposal would equate to an increase in floor area of some 96%. Both main parties agree this figure, although as an element of demolition would take place to make way for the proposal, the figure may be slightly high.
5. The Policy's explanatory text indicates that the said requirement is to ensure that the existing variety in the housing stock is not diminished through excessive replacement and extension of dwellings. The Council's relevant reason for refusal refers to such but its case report does not mention how, or to what extent, the proposed development would affect the range of dwelling sizes or housing stock in the local area. Further, whilst the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which post-dates the LPSR by some six years, looks to maintain a choice of housing it does not advise that there should be restrictions on normal householder type developments in order to maintain or achieve this. Without, therefore, clear evidence of the proposal resulting in demonstrable harm in this regard the conflict with Policy H16, arising from the degree of floorspace increase, is insufficient a reason in itself to warrant a refusal of planning permission.

Character and appearance

6. It is proposed that the dwelling be extended at both ground and first floor levels and, as a consequence, its width at two storey height would be considerably increased. At my site visit I noted that both the dwelling's flanks have been markedly extended at single-storey level, neither of which appear as sympathetic additions. Indeed, one such extension appeared to be in the process of being demolished. The proposal would sweep away the existing incongruity.
7. The proposed two-storey element, with a ridgeline of similar height to the existing dwelling, would be set back from the main frontage, providing some articulation. Four dormer windows, two to the front and two to the rear, would be set well into the roofplanes. On the opposite flank the proposed single storey addition would have a high, pitched roof with a central ridge and I do not consider that the dwelling and its two proposed side extensions would sit awkwardly together compromising the integrity of the main dwelling. Certainly, it would represent an improvement on the current situation and, given that a fallback exists whereby the appellants could utilise their householder permitted development entitlement, a less cohesive development might result which could be harmful, visually, to the dwelling's front façade.
8. Policy CP29 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (LPJCS) and LPSR Policy HE2 both serve to ensure a high standard of design for new development, with the latter requiring that alterations and extensions will

only be permitted where they take account of the design, scale and character of the original building, its plot size and its setting. Although the Council raises objections to the proposed extensions' scale, character, form and appearance, on the contrary, I am satisfied that the proposed development would be of an acceptable form and design, appropriate to the host dwelling it would extend. Accordingly, I do not consider that the proposal, in terms of its design, character, or relationship to the dwelling, would have such an impact as to necessitate withholding planning permission. To this extent I see no material conflict with either LPJCS Policy CP29 or LPSR Policy HE2. Neither would the proposal conflict with the general thrust of advice contained within the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Design Guide for Residential Extensions.'

Conclusion and Conditions

9. I have not found that the proposal would give rise to material harm on either of the two main issues. For the above reasons and, having had regard to all matters raised, the appeal succeeds. In terms of conditions, to ensure a satisfactory appearance I impose a requirement that the extension be built using external materials to match that of the existing dwelling. Also, in the interests of certainty, I impose a condition requiring that the development be built in accordance with the approved plans.
10. Finally, the Council has suggested the imposition of a condition with a specific limitation on the dwelling's total habitable floor area. This is neither necessary nor reasonable, as planning permission is being granted subject to the limitations of the approved plans whilst a blanket restriction on any subsequent additions to the property, should proposals for such arise in the future, would not be appropriate here given that each case must be considered on its own planning merits, or otherwise. Neither would it be appropriate for me to cancel any possible permitted development rights that may remain subsequently given the dwelling's contextual setting.

Timothy C King

INSPECTOR