

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2017

by Jonathan Manning BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/17/3169854

1 Phoenix Close, Wokingham, RG41 3HB

- 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 Gavin Eade against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 163275, dated 22 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The decision notice provided by the Council is not dated. However, the appeal form states that the Council's decision was issued on 27 January 2017. I have therefore used this date in the above banner.

Main Issue

3. The main issue of the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located on Phoenix Close and accommodates a linked detached two-storey property. The site is located on the junction between Phoenix Close and Kestrel Way and therefore sits on a prominent corner location. Although the address is Phoenix Close, the front elevation of the appeal property is orientated towards Kestrel Way. I observed on my site visit that the site is highly visible from the surrounding area, due to its corner location and the open area of land that runs from outside of the appeal site to the junction of Heron Road and Kestrel Way.
 5. The appeal scheme seeks to erect a two-storey front extension, which would be sited in the middle of the host dwelling and would have an asymmetrical gable end. The ridge height of the proposed extension would match the height of the existing property and would project from it at this height by some 4.5 metres. Further, the proposed extension would project from the front elevation of the dwelling by approximately 2.3 metres. This, along with the not insignificant width of the proposed extension would result in a large and overly dominant extension, which would, in my view, be unsympathetic to the host dwelling.
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6. Further, as set out above, the proposed extension would have an asymmetrical gable end, which would meet the roof of the existing single storey extension. This would create an overly complicated and contrived roof scape, which would appear incongruous both to the host dwelling and within the area. Given all of these matters, I consider that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Further, whilst the extension would be set back from the road, the appeal site is, nonetheless, in a highly visible location and the overly bulky and dominant extension, notably set forward from the existing building line would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, even when viewed from the east along Kestrel Way.
7. I acknowledge that there are other properties in the immediate area, with similar front projecting gable ends. However, these are generally smaller and are, in most cases, set down slightly from the ridge height of the main roof scape. In my view, each of them appears subservient and in keeping with the host dwelling. I acknowledge that No 9 Kestrel Way does have a large front two-storey extension. However, this is set to one side of the dwelling and it does not have an awkward roof scape, which would be the case here. Further, I consider that No 9 is not located in such a prominent location as the appeal site. Consequently, I am not of the view that No 9 or any other property in the immediate area sets any sort of precedent for the appeal scheme.
8. I note the views of the appellant who suggests that the existing dwelling is in their view somewhat unattractive and that when viewed from the east it is an unusually narrow proportioned house compared to its immediate neighbours. The appellant also maintains that the single storey extension to the side is dominant with an odd projecting parapet wall and the property is inconsistent with the surrounding properties. Whilst this may all be the case, this does not provide suitable justification for a development that would be harmful in its own right.
9. The appellant has set out that the proposed extension is much smaller than a previous proposal refused by the Council (Ref: F/2009/1430) and in that case the planning officer set out that there was some scope for further bulk and mass towards the front of the dwelling. However, I must consider this scheme on its own individual merits.
10. In conclusion, the scheme by virtue of its scale, bulk and siting, would create a very dominant feature, which would have a contrived roof scape design. The scheme would appear as an incongruous and overly prominent feature both to the host dwelling and the area. The proposal would therefore cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. As a result, the scheme runs contrary to Policy CP3 'General Principles of Development' of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and the Borough's Design Guide (2012), namely R7, R8 and R9.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Jonathan Manning

INSPECTOR