

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 July 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/17/3175264

2 Blue Bird Gate, Charlwood, Horley, Surrey RH6 0GT

- 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 Andrew Warren against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application, Ref. MO/2016/2038/PLAH, dated 16 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is an extension to the garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an extension to the garage at 2 Blue Bird Gate, Charlwood, Horley, Surrey in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. MO/2016/2038/PLAH, dated 16 December 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 shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos: 16107:01; 16107:10; 16107:11;
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building;
 - 4) The extended garage shall not at any time be used for any purpose other than the storage of motor vehicles and domestic storage ancillary to the residential use of the property.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: (i) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 ('the Framework') and any relevant development plan policies; (ii) the effect on the openness of the Green Belt, and (iii) the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether Inappropriate Development

3. The third bullet point of paragraph 89 of the Framework explains that the extension or alteration of a building is not inappropriate development provided
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it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

4. In this instance the Council has regarded the garage as the original building. However, the garage is ancillary to the dwelling and although detached it is close to the house. The dwelling and the garage together should therefore be regarded as the 'original building' for the purposes of assessing whether the extension would be a disproportionate addition under paragraph 89 of the Framework. Given the significantly smaller percentage increase that would result I do not consider that the proposed garage extension can reasonably be regarded as being 'disproportionate' for the purposes of the Framework. Policy ENV2 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 ('the Local Plan') has not been 'Saved' and there is therefore no Council policy on the Green Belt to be considered in conjunction with paragraph 89 of the Framework. Accordingly, because the development would not be disproportionate within the meaning of paragraph 89 of the Framework, no 'very special circumstances' are required to justify the proposal in the Green Belt.

Effect on Openness of the Green Belt

5. The appeal proposal is for a wrap around extension on its western and southern sides. In both cases this is an area between the existing garage and a close-boarded fence demarcating the property boundary. In addition, on the western side to the rear of the garage are mature trees forming the edge of a copse outside the Blue Bird Gate development.
6. Although the additional floorspace figures are substantial, by confining the proposed extensions to the enclosed spaces adjoining a building that is at the very edge of the residential development I consider that there would be only slight effect on the openness of the Green Belt. The overall height of the building would remain unaltered, whilst at the rear of the garage a flat roof is proposed of a height not much greater than the existing fence. To all intents and purposes this part of the proposal would not be visible.
7. From the south, the entrance to the Blue Bird Gate development, the flank extension would be set largely against the existing building and with a hipped roof sloping away. From the north, the aspect would be over the private rear garden towards the flat roof and the receding slope of the hip at the far end. This leaves only the front view from the east where the 3m or so width of the extension would be readily apparent. However, from this aspect the garage would be read together with the much greater bulk of the dwelling and with its recessed position set against two of the property boundaries I again consider that the effect on openness would be minor.

Effect on Character and Appearance

8. The Blue Bird Gate development is only a couple of years old and has an open plan layout with a pleasingly coherent design that embraces the house types and the garages, together their external materials. The combination of these factors means that considerable care must be given to both the principle and detail of any extensions to the dwellings on the development if its high quality is to be maintained.

9. Ordinarily, this might reasonably be expected to preclude a doubling of the floorspace of any of the garages as is proposed in this case, and quite possibly even smaller extensions. Moreover, it would be reasonable to conclude that this would particularly apply to No. 2, the house closest to, and most visible from, the entrance of the development from Charlwood Road.
10. However, in this instance the proximity of the dwelling and its garden to an edge of the development set against mature trees and, critically, the fact that the garage is positioned just over 3m away from its two plot boundaries leaving a hidden and unusable area of garden, affords an opportunity for a relatively discreet extension to the garage, despite its substantial size. Accordingly, after careful consideration I consider that there would not be harm caused to the character and appearance of the area in conflict with Local Plan Policies RUD9, ENV22 & ENV23 and Section 7: 'Requiring Good Design' of the Framework.

Conclusion and Conditions

11. In the light of my findings on the main issues I shall allow the appeal. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt. A condition stipulating matching external materials will ensure that the extension harmonises with the existing building and safeguards visual amenity. Finally, because of the substantial size of the extended garage I shall impose a condition to ensure that its use remains ancillary to the dwelling and consistent with the provisions of Policy RUD9.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR