
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 August 2017

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

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

Decision date: 11 August 2017

Appeal Reference: APP/R3650/D/17/3176689

42 Wrecclesham Hill, Wrecclesham, Farnham GU10 4JW

- 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 R Dunne against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application (reference WA/2017/0022, dated 13 December 2016) was refused by notice dated 8 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a side and rear extension to the existing bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a side and rear extension to the existing bungalow at 42 Wrecclesham Hill, Wrecclesham, Farnham GU10 4JW, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference WA/2017/0022, dated 13 December 2016), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the residential amenities of neighbours (whether there would be an unacceptable loss of outlook or overbearing impact).

Reasons

3. Wrecclesham Hill is a busy road, the A325, with residential development along both frontages in the vicinity of the appeal site that is somewhat mixed in character and age. On the north-west, the land slopes down, away from the road level, to undeveloped land, with a row of dwellings alongside the road. In the vicinity of the appeal site, there is a secondary access drive between the dwellings and the main road.
4. Some properties along the north-west frontage of Wrecclesham Hill have been extended and modernised in recent times, with limited gaps between buildings. This includes number 40, which adjoins the appeal site to the north-east and which has been extensively modernised in recent times, giving it a contemporary appearance.

5. By contrast, the building to the south-east of the appeal site has an unconventional form, though it is constructed of brickwork under a tiled roof. It has been constructed as two flats or maisonettes, numbers 44 and 46 Wrecclisham Hill, the flats being arranged on two main floors with additional accommodation within the roof pitch. Number 44 is at the ground floor level, with number 46 above. The stair to number 46 is attached to the rear elevation of the building and number 44 has windows in the side elevation at ground level, facing the appeal site.
6. Number 42 Wrecclisham Hill, the appeal building, is a bungalow that is now in the process of being refurbished. It evidently included living space in the roof but is clearly dated in both construction and appearance.
7. Substantial alterations and extensions are now proposed, to modernise and expand the existing dwelling, giving it a modern architectural appearance and providing much more extensive accommodation, including bedrooms and bathrooms on the first floor.
8. Among other things, the 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "requiring good design" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 7) and it points out the importance of creating an attractive streetscape and maintaining the overall quality of the area. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, which includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation in new residential development. Indeed, paragraph 17 of the NPPF identifies as a "core planning principle" the need to "always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings".
9. An emphasis on the importance of good design and the need to protect neighbours' amenities is also to be found in local planning policies, notably at Policies D1 and D4 of the 'Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002'.
10. The proposed development would be attractive and beneficial in itself, providing a good modern dwelling on a substantial plot in a desirable location. Nevertheless, it is essential to consider the impact that the scheme would have on neighbouring property. It would not have any harmful effect on the property to the north-east but the effect on the property to the south-west is more contentious.
11. In its finished state the new dwelling, as proposed, would stand 500mm from its south-west boundary, at the nearest point. A long straight wall would face the neighbouring property with a continuous roof slope above. This part of the finished building would have an eaves level at approximately a single storey height, with the roof sloping away from the boundary, enclosing first floor accommodation further away from the side boundary.
12. The officer's report upon which the Council's refusal was based observes that "there are a number of windows on the side elevation of 44 Wrecclisham Hill, some of which appear to serve habitable rooms". The neighbouring building is set apart from its boundary with the appeal site and on its ground floor three windows face the side boundary. However, evidence has been submitted, on behalf of the appellant, to explain that these particular windows include a bathroom window and two kitchen windows. This submission is convincing. On the basis of these various factors and in the light of the evidence presented,

- therefore, it can be concluded that the proposed development at number 42 would not cause an unacceptable loss of outlook or overbearing impact to the living conditions within number 44.
13. Windows that serve the upper floors of the building at 44-46 Wrecclesham Hill would clearly not be unduly affected by the proposed development at number 42, due to their more elevated positions.
 14. Reference is also made in the submissions to the impact of the proposed development on the private garden space of number 44-46 Wrecclesham Hill. It is noted, however, that the property enjoys the benefit of a long garden and, again, that the configuration of the new roofs would limit the visual impact of the building in relation to its neighbours. Hence, the proposed development would not have an unacceptable effect on amenities within the garden.
 15. In short, because of the configuration of the roof, it is not necessary in this instance to require a greater setback of the finished development from the side boundary, in order to protect the neighbours' amenities. Although the very narrow gap alongside the finished house (within the site) may prove to be awkward for its future occupiers, it does not justify a refusal of planning permission.
 16. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area and the proposed extension would be a useful addition to the accommodation at 42 Wrecclesham Hill. The contribution that the appeal scheme would make to the provision of residential accommodation in the locality, even though it would be limited, weighs in favour of the appeal. Hence, I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with either national or local planning policies, in principle and that it can properly be permitted, subject to conditions. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.
 17. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of those suggested by the local planning authority in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal). I have concluded that conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained. As the Council have pointed out, neighbours' privacy can be protected by the imposition of a suitable condition, which is also included.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - drawing number 42-P-001 Rev A (Location Plan);
 - drawing number 42-P-002 Rev C (Block Plan);
 - drawing number 42-P-003 Rev A (Existing Plans);
 - drawing number 42-P-004 Rev A (Existing Elevations);
 - drawing number 42-P-005 (Proposed Plans);
 - drawing number 42-P-007 Rev A (Proposed Elevations);
 - drawing number 42-P-008 (Site Photos);
 - drawing number 42-P-009 (Existing Block Plan).
3. No development shall take place until samples (or specifications) of the materials and drawings (at appropriate scales) of the construction details to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the new development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, using the approved materials.
4. The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the proposed dormer window in the south-west ("Side A") elevation of the extension has been fitted with obscured glazing, and no part of that window that is less than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which it is installed shall be capable of being opened. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no further modifications to this window shall be made and no windows, doors or openings of any kind shall be inserted in the side elevations of the building without the express written approval of the local planning authority.