



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2017

by Claire Searson MSc PGDip BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 31st August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/17/3178998
46 Greenmeads, Woking, GU22 9QJ

- 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 Winter against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2017/0252, dated 6 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a first floor front extension to create front gable, erection of a rear dormer and insertion of rooflights in existing side elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a first floor front extension to create front gable, erection of a rear dormer and insertion of rooflights in existing side elevations at 46 Greenmeads, Woking, GU22 9QJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PLAN/2017/0252, dated 6 March 2017, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - 1:1250 Location Plan
 - 1:500 Proposed Block Plan
 - 1:100 Existing and Proposed Elevations Drawing No. E/002
 - 1:100 Existing and Proposed Side Elevations Drawing No. E/003
 - 1:100 Existing and Proposed Floor Plans Drawing No. P001
 - 1:100 Proposed 2nd Floor Drawing No. PSS/05
 - 1:50 Proposed Section Drawing No PSS/04
 - 1:100 Existing and Proposed Roof Plans Drawing No E006
 - 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 extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the roof light to the side elevation facing towards No 47 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. Once installed the obscured glazing shall be retained thereafter.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of the development from the Council's decision notice, as this is more precise.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal upon the (a) character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene and (b) the living conditions of neighbouring occupants in respect of privacy.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property is a 2-storey detached dwelling which is located within a large corner plot along Greenmeads. The dwelling dates from the mid-20th century and is of red brick construction with a plain tiled gabled roof. It is located within the plot at an angle.
5. The wider area comprises of a mixture of mid-20th century dwellings as well as later infill developments. The general character of the area is relatively spacious with detached dwellings set in reasonable sized plots. Dwellings are individual in their design, although are generally characteristic of the period of their development.
6. Gabled and hipped roof structures, as well as cat-slide roofs and gabled roofs and extensions are common features of properties in the area. The overall result is a great variety in the style and design of roofs in the area. This has introduced a level of individuality to many of the detached properties and the overall character and appearance of the area is thus varied in nature.
7. The proposed development includes the alteration of the front elevation to include a front gable. This would replace the existing cat-slide roof and pitched and flat roofed dormer windows. Accommodation would also be provided in the existing loft and a further window would be incorporated towards the top of the gable, serving the staircase.
8. While the creation of a gabled roof to the front extension would undoubtedly change the appearance of No 46, I find that this would be entirely consistent with the architecture of the existing dwelling and would be in harmony with the varied character of the roof scape found within the local area, subject to a condition requiring matching materials. In addition, I consider that its scale and mass, rather than being a bulky addition, would be subservient to the main dwelling, as set down from the ridge of the main roof of the dwelling.
9. To the rear, the bulk of the roof would be increased through the creation of a dormer window to create accommodation at second floor level. However, the proposed dormer window would be stepped back from the eaves and would be around 6.5m in width, and as such would represent a modest addition which would ensure that the original form of the rear roof remains legible.
10. Moreover, due to the juxtaposition of No 46 within the plot, views of the rear dormer from within the street scene would be reduced and would not be so dominant as to cause harm in this regard.

11. I am also aware that the appellant considers that the addition of a rear dormer as proposed would comprise permitted development and I have taken this fallback position into account as I consider that there would appear to be a reasonable prospect of this being implemented if the appeal is dismissed.
12. I therefore conclude that the development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling nor to the wider street scene. The proposed development would accord with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012 (CS) which seeks to secure good design which pays regard to the scale, height, proportions and materials of the host building and the character of the wider area. The development would also comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Living Conditions

13. Due to its positioning on the corner plot, No 47 shares its rear boundary with the side elevation of No 45a. The proposed dormer window would therefore face out towards the side elevation of this property.
14. The Councils Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document 2008 (SPD) recommends a separation distance of 20metres, from a second floor window, reduced to 15m where this would overlook a side boundary. The proposed dormer window would fall below these guidelines and it is on this basis that the Council considers that the rear dormer would create an unacceptable loss of privacy.
15. However, the Council's concerns seem to rest solely on this technical breach, rather than relying on any site specific analysis. Due to the juxtaposition of these dwellings there is already degree of overlooking between the two properties. However, Nos 47 and 45a are separated by a tall boundary fence and existing vegetation within the grounds of No 45a also provides screening between the two dwellings. There also appears to be no windows to the upper floor of No 45a at the side elevation serving habitable rooms.
16. While the proposed dormer window would increase the views into the garden of No 45a, in light of the screening and the circumstances of the site, this would largely be screened by vegetation and would affect the side garden only. Occupants would still be able to enjoy their rear private garden area without any increase in overlooking into this. I also note that the closest window to No 45a would serve an ensuite and would be obscurely glazed.
17. Moreover, again I am mindful that the erection of a dormer window would usually be classed as permitted development.
18. Taking this all into account, I consider it would be unreasonable withhold planning permission on this basis, and I find the proposal in accordance with Policy CS21 of the CS which requires that development should achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjoining properties in terms of privacy. There would also be no conflict with the Framework which seeks to secure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants at paragraph 17.

Other Matters

19. Concern is raised in respect of the effect of the proposed development upon No 47, a single storey detached dwelling located to the northern boundary of the appeal property.
20. Specific concern relates to the proposed rooflight which would be located to the side hip of the existing roof. However, as recognised by the Council this could be conditioned to be non-opening and obscure glazed to reduce any effect. Furthermore I also agree with the Council that, due to the separation of No 46 and 47, there would be no impact upon outlook of occupants to No 46 from the proposed roof extensions.
21. Concern is also raised regarding the room heights and any changes to the external appearance that this may cause. I have determined the appeal based upon the submitted plans before me and such matters typically form part of the Building Regulations. In any case, should it be necessary to make any external changes, this would require the approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Conditions

22. In addition to the standard condition relating to the timescales, I have required the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans in the interest of certainty.
23. A condition relating to use of matching materials is necessary in order to preserve the character and appearance of the dwelling and area. As discussed above, I have also imposed a condition in respect of the side rooflight, in order to protect the living conditions of occupants at No 47.

Conclusion

24. Overall, for the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted, subject to the conditions discussed above.

C Searson
INSPECTOR