



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2017

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/17/3180168

Dallow Gill, Cold Ash Hill, Cold Ash, Thatcham, RG18 9PT

- 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 Oli Stokes against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00922/HOUSE, dated 28 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 5 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension to form an en-suite.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor extension to form an en-suite at Dallow Gill, Cold Ash Hill, Cold Ash, Thatcham RG18 9PT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 17/00922/HOUSE, dated 28 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: Location Plan, Block Plan, GP/01/16, GP/02/16, GP/03/16, GP/05/16 Rev C, GP/06/16 Rev E, GP/07/16/Rev E, GP/08/16 Rev C.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the dormer window 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. The dormer window shall be retained as such permanently thereafter.
 - 5) No development, including site clearance and any other preparatory works, shall commence until a scheme for the protection of trees to be retained on the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the living conditions of occupiers of the adjacent property Shelterstone, having particular regard to matters of outlook and privacy.

Reasons

3. Dallow Gill is a detached bungalow with a pitched roof, which has single storey flat roof extensions on either side of it. Planning permission has recently been granted for various extensions to the property. These include a first floor extension over the north-east flat roof side extension to enhance the first floor accommodation in the roof space (ref 16/03513/HOUSE). The proposal before me is for a first floor extension over the south-west flat roof side extension to create an en-suite bathroom.
4. The west side elevation of Dallow Gill sits in close proximity to the shared boundary with neighbouring property Shelterstone. The proposed extension would bring the first floor side elevation of Dallow Gill closer to this boundary. Dallow Gill sits behind the main rear elevation of Shelterstone so the extension would sit alongside part of the rear garden of Shelterstone.
5. The extension would not, however, be particularly deep and it would have a hipped roof design. Furthermore, mature conifers provide screening at present. Although landscaping cannot be considered permanent, even if these conifers were to be lost at a later date, I do not consider that the proposed extension would have a harmful impact in terms of creating a sense of enclosure or loss of outlook to occupiers of Shelterstone given its modest proportions.
6. The proposed side extension would have a front dormer window. This would not directly overlook Shelterstone, but instead would look out across the frontage of Dallow Gill. Oblique views of Shelterstone might be possible but a condition requiring this window to be obscure glazed and non-opening, as suggested by the appellant, would protect against this. I therefore find no harm in terms of overlooking. Given my findings above I also find no reason to conclude there would be a harmful perception of overlooking from this window.
7. Taking the above points together I find no harm to the living conditions of occupiers of Shelterstone in respect of outlook or privacy. It follows, therefore, that I find no conflict with Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) which seeks to ensure good design, not only in relation to the appearance of a development but the way in which it functions. Nor do I find any conflict with the Council's House Extensions, Supplementary Planning Guidance.
8. Although not included in the reason for refusal the Council raises concern in their officer report over the cumulative increase in bulk in the property and its impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposed extension would not, in my opinion, appear overly bulky, rather it would tie in well with the extensions already granted planning permission and, as noted by the Council, would result in a more harmonious design overall. In any event, the proposed extension is well screened from public views by the detached garage at the appeal site. I therefore find no harm in this regard.

Conditions and conclusion

9. In addition to the standard time limit condition I have specified the approved plans as this provides certainty. To ensure a satisfactory appearance I have included a condition requiring the use of matching materials and a pre-commencement condition to ensure the retained trees at the site are

adequately protected during building works as suggested by the Council's Tree Officer. As discussed above, I have also included a condition requiring the proposed en-suite dormer window to be obscure glazed and non-opening. Subject to these conditions, the appeal is allowed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR