
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2017

by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

a person appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 19 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/17/3179286

Crook Cottage, High Road, Cookham, Maidenhead SL6 9HR

- 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 Philip Anderson against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 17/00822, dated 8 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 3 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is rebuilding of existing garage building. Rear extension to connect to garage building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for rebuilding of existing garage building and rear extension to connect to garage building at Crook Cottage, High Road, Cookham, Maidenhead SL6 9HR in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 17/00822, dated 8 March 2017, 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 hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans; P01, P06, P07, P08 and P09 Rev A.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be constructed of the materials which are detailed on the approved plans.
 - 4) Before the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, the east facing window serving the dining room shall be fitted with obscured glazing and constructed so that no part may open. The window shall be retained in that condition thereafter.
 - 5) No additional windows or other glazed openings shall be formed in the walls of the development hereby permitted.

Main issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i. the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area, and
 - ii. the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property with particular regard to light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property, Crook Cottage, is a modest two storey brick built detached Victorian house. It is positioned at the southern end of a row of buildings of a similar age that likewise face Cookham railway station to the east.
4. As the road wraps around the southern boundary of the appeal site, the rear garden area to the house forms part of the street scene. In this respect, the site is only comparable to the corner plot found at the northern end of the row of buildings. That is occupied by a cafe, (the former Railway Tavern) which has an area to the rear which forms part of the Lower Road street scene.
5. The cottage has a full width single storey lean-to rear extension and towards the far end of the rear garden area there is an existing sizeable single storey flat roof garage. The floor area of the garage is similar to that of the extended cottage whilst its floor level is a little higher.
6. The proposal seeks to rebuild the garage and to link it to the rear of the cottage by way of a sunken single storey extension. As emphasised by the Council, this would lead to an extensive spread of flat roofed development across the rear garden area. Nevertheless, the effect of the proposed scheme on the character and appearance of the area would be very limited and in some respects positive.
7. In views from the public realm, the link extension would be set back and screened by the cottage and the high soft landscaping along the southern boundary. Whilst the soft landscaping may ultimately die back, there is the reasonable prospect that a high boundary treatment, including a solid gate to the reinstated pedestrian access, would be maintained so as to provide privacy to the principal garden area and the expansively glazed new living accommodation.
8. In private views from the surrounding area, the link extension would be partly screened by the redeveloped garage and the single storey extension attached to the end of the rear projection at the neighbouring property to the north. The remaining element would have a minimal visual presence owing to its sunken nature and low roof form.
9. With the exception of the north-west corner section of the redeveloped garage, which would be marginally raised in height, there would be a significant reduction in the high level bulk compared to the existing building. As the garage is of little visual merit, this reduction would positively benefit the area. Also, the flat roofed scheme would not appear as an altogether alien feature in the locality given the café that occupies the comparable corner plot has a considerably more prominent flat roof component at the rear.
10. The proposed link would not project above the eaves to the existing lean-to extension. It would also not infill the full width of the cottage as the southern element would comprise a courtyard with a pergola. Given these features and the manner in which the overtly modern design of the development would provide a clear visual distinction between new and old, it is considered the scheme would not be harmful to the character of the original house.

11. In light of the above, it is concluded that the proposed development would not have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property or the wider area. It would therefore not conflict with Policies DG1 and H14 of the Council's Local Plan 2003 (LP). Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that extensions do not have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the original property, nor adversely affect the street scene. The development would represent good design in the general overall context of paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework').
12. Similarly, it would not conflict with the guidance on extensions at G6.9a of the Cookham Village Design Statement Supplementary Planning Document 2013, (SPD). The development would be subordinate by way of its low height and sympathetic to the design of the original building through leaving the form and appearance of the cottage largely intact.

Living conditions

13. The boundary with the neighbouring property to the north is currently formed by a brick wall with trellis panels above. In the proposed scheme this would be replaced by the taller 2m high northern wall of the link extension. Whilst there would be some reduction in light levels to ground floor habitable rooms and a greater sense of enclosure compared to the existing situation, 2m is a generally acceptable rear boundary height and would not cause significant harm in either respect.
14. Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposed development would not have an unacceptably harmful effect on the living conditions of the neighbouring property with particular regard to light. It would not conflict with Policy H14 of the LP which seeks to ensure that extensions do not cause an unacceptable loss of light. A good a standard of amenity would continue to be maintained in accordance with the core planning principles set out at paragraph 17 of the Framework. The development would also not conflict with G6.9a of the SPD which sets out that extensions should not result in an unneighbourly impact.
15. It was observed that the nearest ground floor window at the neighbouring house had obscured glazing. This suggests a privacy issue related to the existing boundary treatment that would be improved by the proposed scheme. There would also be the benefit of reducing the overall bulk of the built form that stands alongside the far end of the rear garden. These considerations weigh in favour of the scheme.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out in the preceding paragraphs and having regard to all other matters raised, it is concluded that the appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted.

Conditions

17. In addition to the standard time limit condition, one that requires the development to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans is imposed as this provides certainty. In this particular case it would be inappropriate to attach a condition which requires the external surfaces to match those of the existing building. A condition which requires the development to be constructed of the materials which are detailed on the

approved plans is therefore imposed to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

18. Two further conditions are imposed. The first requires the east facing window serving the dining room to have obscured glazing and to be fixed shut. The second prevents the insertion of additional windows. Both these conditions are necessary to protect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in relation to privacy.

C J Ford

APPOINTED PERSON