

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 June 2019

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/19/3225687

47 Chiltern Drive, Charvil, Reading RG10 9QF

- 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 & Mrs Hughes against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. 182936, dated 24 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 7 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single and two storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Chiltern Drive.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that the appeal dwelling is one of nine properties of the same design grouped around the cul-de-sac head of Chiltern Drive. Although there are some minor original differences and post-development changes, the pleasing symmetry and rhythm of this part of Chiltern Drive essentially remains intact since its construction.
 4. One of the differences is the gradual increase in width from front to rear between No. 47 and No. 45 its neighbour to the north west, and the part two / part single storey extension proposed in the appeal scheme seeks to take advantage of this opportunity to increase the family accommodation.
 5. However, whilst I consider the design to be one of interest and ingenuity in its attempt to provide additional living space in an awkwardly shaped area, I consider that there are two main drawbacks.
 6. Firstly, when read with the original building the contemporary appearance of the extension with its mono pitched roof, diverse roof lines and contrasting style, size and positions of openings appears as too great a contrast. It would, as the Council says in its officers' report, appear unduly contrived when seen against the conventional mid to late C20th design of the front gable.
 7. I acknowledge that there are some cases where a contemporary and contrasting addition to a more 'traditional' design can be successfully achieved,
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but in my view one of the requirements is the subservience of the extension in relation to the original dwelling.

8. This is the second drawback of the proposal. The size of the extension, which I appreciate is needed to obtain the first floor living space, would be substantial. And as the Council says, rather than being subordinate to the original house it would draw the eye as being tantamount to a separate dwelling, especially because of the separation due to the single storey flat roof link element.
9. I have noted the appellant's comments on this point and on the narrower width of the extension with its substantial set-back compared to the original building. However, I nonetheless consider that the perception of the scale and bulk of the addition would be such that this part of the cul-de-sac head would appear to a noticeable extent cramped and 'shoe horned' into the restricted and awkwardly shaped area.
10. I have carefully considered the other comments in the grounds of appeal on this issue, but whilst as stated the design is not without merit, I am not persuaded that the scheme would be in keeping with the host dwelling and acceptable in the street scene. Accordingly, there would be conflict with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy 2010; the principles of the Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD, and Section 12: 'Achieving Well Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 ('the Framework').

Other Matter

11. The appeal proposal was additionally refused because of the absence of a Flood Risk Assessment ('FRA'). This has now been submitted with the appeal, although because this is a householder application the Council's comments on the document are not available.
12. Be that as it may, because of my conclusion on the main issue I see no need to adjudicate on whether the FRA is acceptable as regards local and national policies in the Core Strategy and the Framework respectively.

Conclusion

13. I have had regard to all other matters raised for the appellants but for the reasons explained above the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR