The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 July 2019

by R Norman BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/19/3228585
3 Mary Cross Close, Wiggington HP23 6QL

- 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 J Reading against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
- The application Ref 4/00527/19/FHA, dated 6 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 May 2019.
- The development proposed is a two storey front and side extension with alterations to roof, removal of chimney, detached outbuilding and additional car spaces.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey front and side extension with alterations to roof, removal of chimney, detached outbuilding and additional car spaces at 3 Mary Cross Close, Wiggington HP23 6QL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 4/00527/19/FHA, dated 6 March 2019, 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: Site Plan, Location Plan, Drawing Nos 1B and 2A.

    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.

Procedural Matters

2. In Part E of the appeal form it states that the description of development was changed from the original application form. I have therefore used the description of development from the appeal form in the above heading.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are

    - whether the proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and development plan policy; and

    - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

Green Belt

4. The appeal site comprises a detached, two-storey dwelling located at the end of a small residential cul-de-sac. It is located within a Selected Small Village within the Green Belt.

5. Paragraph 143 of the Framework (2019) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 145 of the Framework identifies a list of developments that are not considered to be inappropriate which includes the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

6. Policy CS6 of Dacorum's Local Planning Framework Core Strategy 2006 – 2031 (2013) (Core Strategy) states that within Selected Small Villages in the Green Belt, which includes Wiggington, house extensions will be permitted where they are sympathetic to their surroundings in terms of local character, design, scale, landscaping and visual impact.

7. The proposed development would include a two storey extension to the side and part of the front of the existing property. It would be located adjacent to No 2 and would provide a dining room, utility, enlarged kitchen, shower room and new access doorway at ground floor. It would provide an additional bedroom and result in the reconfiguration of the first floor. A play room would be provided within the second floor of the extension.

8. The development would result in additional built form to the side boundary at ground floor. The extension would project forward to just over halfway across the front elevation at ground and first floor level. At first floor level the area above the existing garage would be infilled which would be stepped in from the side boundary. The main increase in the dwelling would occur at first floor level with a reasonably limited ground floor addition. I find that this level of additional accommodation would not be disproportionate over and above the size of the original building.

9. Consequently, I find that the proposed development would comply with paragraph 145 part c) of the Framework and is therefore not inappropriate. As a result, it is not necessary to consider matters of openness or very special circumstances. The proposed development would therefore comply with Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy and the provisions of Section 13 of the Framework.

Character and Appearance

10. Mary Cross Close is a small cul-de-sac development which comprises a mix of detached and semi-detached properties. The appeal site is located to the end of a private drive and is set back from adjoining properties. It forms the end dwelling along this side of the road.

11. The surrounding dwellings, although a comprehensive estate development, show variations in their appearance and designs. A common feature is the presence of gable elements. Whilst I note that many of these gable features are part of the original properties the Appellant has provided an indication of the comparative widths and heights of the existing gables in the area.

12. In addition to this I have had regard to the varied appearance of the dwellings in the area and the location of the host property. The development would introduce a reasonably large gable and result in a loss of some of the spaciousness between the properties. However, I do not find this to be unduly harmful to a degree which would render the development unacceptable.

13. The proposal would project forward of the existing front elevation. Saved Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 – 2011 (2004) (Local Plan) states that a front extension may be acceptable providing it does not project beyond the front wall of the dwelling in a way which dominates the street scene, amongst other criteria. Whilst the proposed extension would be reasonably large, it would not project forward of the front elevation of the adjacent dwelling, No 2. This, in combination with the location of the appeal property set back at the very end of the cul-de-sac would ensure that the proposal would not dominate the street scene.

14. The proposed extension would sit across part of the front elevation of the existing property, however for the above reasons I do not find that this would be harmful to the character of the host dwelling or the area. The fenestration would reflect the existing property and the ridge would be slightly set down from the main dwelling to achieve a degree of subservience in height. Consequently, as a result of the variations in designs in the cul-de-sac and the positioning of the existing dwelling, the proposed development would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

15. It would therefore comply with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy. These seek to ensure that development enhances the character of an area, integrates with the streetscape character and respects adjoining properties, amongst other things. It would also comply with Saved Appendix 3 and 7 of the Local Plan which also require proposals to respect the character of the surrounding area and harmonise with the original design and character of the house.

Other Matters

16. The appeal property is located within the Chilterns AONB. Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that the special qualities of the AONB are conserved. The proposed development would be enclosed within the existing cul-de-sac and would not result in harm to the special qualities of the area.

Conditions

17. In addition to the standard time limit condition I have imposed a condition listing the approved plans as this provides certainty. A condition for the external materials to match the existing is necessary in the interest of the visual character of the area. The Council have requested no additional conditions and I consider none to be necessary.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

R Norman

INSPECTOR