



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2019

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/19/3231260

36 Mays Road, Wokingham, RG40 1RW

- 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 and Mrs Hamilton against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 190637, dated 1 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 12 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is two storey front extension, two storey side and rear extension, single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. I consider that the main issues in this case are its effect on the character and appearance of the area and on the living conditions of neighbouring residents.

Reasons

3. 36 Mays Road is a two storey detached house at the end of a short cul-de-sac, offset slightly into the corner of the hammerhead. The surrounding area is residential in character, with a number of house styles typical of the 1970s. The majority are of simple pitched roof design, some with the gable end facing the road, and the houses around the hammerhead follow no formal building line. No. 36 has the ridge parallel to the road and a small front projection and porch under a monopitch canopy. It has a detached double garage approximately 7-8 metres from the front of the house.
4. The relevant policies in this case include CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy 2010 (the Core Strategy) which require, among other things, development to maintain the high quality of the environment and to be of an appropriate scale and character and without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users. Section 4 of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document *Borough Design Guide* 2012 (the SPD) provides detailed advice on residential extensions. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (the Framework) which advises that new development should be of a high quality design.
5. I consider that the proposed two storey extension to the front would be of a height and overall size which would be out of scale with the existing house.

Notwithstanding its lower roof ridge compared with that of the main house, and the step down to the garage, it would appear as a dominant and bulky addition to the existing, relatively modest, house. Although there is no regular pattern of development in this part of Mays Road, and several of the properties have been extended, most of the houses appear from the street to have retained their original scale, proportion and layout. Their informal siting allows for a sense of space around them.

6. I accept that a substantial increase in size is not in itself necessarily unacceptable, particularly as the appeal plot is larger than the average in the vicinity. There are some circumstances in which large front extensions may be acceptable. Many of the nearby properties have been altered, with extensions at the front, side and rear, but the front extensions have generally been relatively small, with projections up to 2.5m.
7. I consider that the sense of space and openness which is evident in this corner of the cul-de-sac makes an important contribution to the general character and appearance of the street scene. In this context, the much increased bulk and uncharacteristic L-shaped form would neither maintain nor enhance the quality of the local character.
8. The proposal includes a part single storey and part two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension. The former would fill in the space at the rear of the existing kitchen, with an additional storey above along the existing line of the side, kitchen extension. It would be of a similar design to that of the main house, of an appropriate scale and would maintain a separation of more than 1 metre from the boundary with 52 Harmer Close, the neighbouring property to the east. The proposed rear extension would be of an appropriate scale and design, in keeping with the existing house and the size of the plot. I consider that these elements are acceptable.
9. I note that although the existing house has four bedrooms, these are relatively small, as is the bathroom, and I accept the appellants' wish to improve the standard and convenience of the accommodation. However, whilst I consider that the principle of extending the property to provide the additional space is acceptable and the plot is large enough, I am not persuaded that this proposal is the most appropriate solution.
10. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the existing house and the street scene, contrary to Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and the guidance in the SPD.
11. The proposed extensions would result in an increase in built form approximately 1.5m from the boundary with 52 Harmer Close, the occupiers of which have expressed concern regarding the impact on the light to their windows, especially those serving a study. The latter is in a side extension immediately next to the common side boundary and has windows facing roughly northeast to the road and southwest into the rear garden.
12. The appellant has submitted a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment of habitable rooms in accordance with national guidance set out in BRE 209 (*Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a Guide to Good Practice*). This indicates that while there would be some reduction in sunlight and daylight to the windows at No. 52 and that this would be greater in the case of the rear

window of the study, this would be within acceptable levels in the context of national guidance.

13. The front window of the study is already shaded by a high mixed hedge along the common boundary. The rear window is in close proximity to a timber fence and a small amount of shrubbery. It would continue to benefit from its south/southwest aspect. On the basis of the Assessment and in view of the existing situation arising from the fencing and hedge, I am satisfied that the proposal would not result in an increased adverse effect on the windows serving habitable rooms sufficient to warrant dismissing the appeal.
14. I conclude that the proposal would not result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents through loss of light and that in this respect it would be consistent with Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.
15. I have found that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its impact on neighbouring residents and that the side and rear extensions would be acceptable. However, this does not outweigh my finding that the proposed two storey front extension would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to policy.
16. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR