The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2019

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/19/3232244
20 Lupin Ride, Crowthorne, RG45 6UR

- 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 Ms Heather Fenwick against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
- The application Ref 190641, dated 5 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2019.
- The development proposed is a first floor side extension to include dormer to front above existing garage to create habitable accommodation.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I use the Council's description of development which is more precise than the application form; I note the Appellant also uses this on the appeal form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the:
   - character and appearance of the host property and the locality; and
   - living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached two storey home with an attached pitched roof garage to its side. It is set on a spur off the main road and lies on a good sized plot alongside woodland. To the other, near, side is a home (No 18) which is set markedly further forward than the appeal property. The area is of established good quality residential character and the appearance is one of a pleasing suburban nature. The proposal is as described above.

Character and appearance

5. The wish to build above the garage has given rise to concerns from the Council relating to the bulk and mass of the first floor side extension and it not appearing subservient to the host dwelling. The case is made that there would be a detrimental impact on the street scene.

6. I would not agree with the Council's analysis. The front elevation of the addition would be set behind the home's main elevation and the ridge height

would be lower than the original property. The semi-dormer approach to the front window would be a neat and modest solution to fenestration and draw upon the principal gable element of the property. The planned extension would also stop well short of the main rear elevation of the host property. In terms of width it would be comfortable at around half of the existing first floor frontage dimension. The gable end would reflect gable ending on the existing home.

7. Taken on its overall visual merits only and judged from a streetscene perspective the extension in its own right would be of a suitable scale and design and certainly appear subservient to the main dwelling.

8. The Council's Core Strategy (CS) Policy CP3 has relevance to the case. It seeks, amongst other matters, to ensure that development is of high quality design reflecting local distinctiveness and being of appropriate form, scale and mass to protect the appearance and character of a neighbourhood. Having regard to the nature of the scheme and this location I conclude that the appeal proposal would not run contrary to this policy which shares similar aesthetic objectives to the Wokingham Borough Design Guide (DG), a document which cannot be expected to cover in detail every eventuality.

Living conditions

9. The appeal property, like its neighbour, has a modest 1 metre gap to the shared side boundary and with the unusual staggered arrangement it runs well beyond this neighbouring rear elevation. The appeal scheme would see a plain first floor gable end extend about 3.6 m beyond the rear elevation of 18 Lupin Ride. To my mind the original property was thoughtfully constructed in that the closest part of No 20 running behind No 18 was single storey and, in the main, towards the rear, mono-pitched away from the shared boundary. This makes for a comfortable relationship. Unfortunately the sheer scale of combined upwards and outwards brick walling and its closeness would markedly and harmfully change this relationship. In this quality of neighbourhood people would reasonably expect an outlook from a patio / rear amenity area to have some open aspect. Unfortunately this sense would change with the appeal scheme to a feeling for the neighbours of being hemmed-in by an over-bearing unduly large and proximate wall.

10. Previously cited CS Policy CP3 is also of relevance in terms of this main issue. Amongst other matters it seeks to ensure that new development would protect residential amenity in all its guises for neighbours. Given the foregoing I would conclude that the appeal scheme would conflict with this policy as well as the DG objective of seeking to ensure that new development would be neighbourly.

Other matters

11. I sympathise with the wish of the Appellant to provide additional accommodation and I can see much thought has been given to the design before me and that clear benefits that would arise for the family. I can see that there is an argument that privacy would increase for the neighbours and I take the point over no loss of light to windows. I have noted the concerns over the processing of the application and the inaccuracy in the Parish Council response. I have considered the nature and scale of other local homes which were highlighted. However, there are siting and context and/or design differences to the unusual layout of the case in hand, and I am not convinced

they set an amenity benchmark; in any event I must assess the present case on its merits. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to one of the main issues identified above.

12. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policy which I cite mirrors relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that whilst the appeal proposal would not have unacceptable effects on the character and appearance of the host property or the locality there would be undue adverse impact on living conditions for neighbours. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR