The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2019

by A Denby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/19/3235272
10 Grange Avenue, Crowthorne, RG45 6QG

- 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 Danny Courtney against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
- The application Ref 191472, dated 1 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 August 2019.
- The development proposed is a single storey side, rear and front extensions, first floor rear extension, and the conversion of the loft space to provide habitable accommodation plus 2no. roof lights and rear dormer roof extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the single storey side, rear and front extensions, first floor rear extension and the conversion of the loft space to provide habitable accommodation plus 2no. roof lights and rear dormer roof extension and planning permission is granted for a single storey front porch extension at 10 Grange Avenue, Crowthorne RG45 6QG in accordance with the terms of the application reference:191472, dated 1 June 2019, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted, and subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

    2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: site location plan (Esc.1:1250); 01-D; 02-D; 03-D; 04-E & 07-E dated 31 May 2019.

    3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the single storey front porch extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matters

2. The property has a planning history which includes planning permission for a proposed first floor side and rear extension and single storey side extension (ref:182017). I saw at my site visit that works relating to this permission have commenced. For the avoidance of doubt, I confirm that my determination of this appeal is based on the plans submitted, and on which the Council made its decision.

3. I am informed that the appeal proposal is a revision of the previous planning permission(ref:182017) and that it differs only in that it incorporates a single storey, gable style front porch extension and a box-style first-floor rear dormer extension to allow for a loft conversion. It is these elements on which the Council has concentrated its determination. Based on the evidence before me, I have no reason to disagree with this. Consequently, my decision concentrates on the single storey front porch extension and the first-floor rear dormer extension.

4. I note that the appeal development has already commenced, however, the reference in the description of development to the proposals being 'part retrospective' is superfluous and I have left it out of my decision.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene.

Reasons

6. The appeal site consists of a detached dwelling which is set back from its front boundary and is located in a predominately residential area. It has a compact and uncomplicated form and design, with simple roof lines, which is reflective of the development in the surrounding area.

Front porch extension

7. The proposed porch, due to its size, would express itself as a subordinate part of the property and would not appear disproportionate or overwhelming to the existing building. Moreover, although the majority of the porch extensions in the street have either a flat roof or a single pitch roof design, due to the existence of other gable roofs in the area, I consider that the gable roof design of the porch would not appear out of keeping with the character and appearance of the street scene. I note the Council have also raised no concerns in this regard.

8. Consequently, the proposed single storey front porch extension would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or street scene. It would not conflict therefore with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework, adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document, (2010) (CS), the Wokingham Borough Council, Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, (2012) (SPD), and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seek to ensure that proposals are of an appropriate scale, mass, built form, materials and character together with a high quality of design.

First floor rear dormer

9. The combination of the roof to the rear extension and proposed dormer window would result in a substantial roof form, and top-heavy appearance to the building, that would be at odds with its established character. Whilst the dormer would utilise materials that would broadly match those used in the existing building, be inset from the side elevation and lower than the existing roof ridge, its intersection with the roof of the rear extension is not well considered.

10. There would be a clear lack of distinction between these two elements, resulting in a complicated, bulky roof arrangement that would not complement the simple and compact style and design of the host property. When considered together these elements would lack architectural subtlety and, although not visually prominent from the surrounding area, would diminish the character of the host property. The position, size and design of the dormer window, in relation to the roof of the rear extension, would be particularly discordant and have an unacceptable harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

11. Albeit the appeal scheme is an attempt to address the Council's objections to previous schemes on the site and would raise no concerns in relation to impact on the street scene, living conditions of adjacent properties or result in overdevelopment of the site, I consider these would have a neutral effect, and therefore do not weigh in favour of the appeal. It is also noted that the proposal would provide additional living accommodation for the appellant, though I am mindful that this benefit would be personal to the appellant and would not outweigh the harm I have identified.

12. On this basis I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to Policy CP3 of the CS, the Council's SPD and the Framework which seek to ensure that proposals achieve a high quality of design.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has drawn my attention to other dormer windows in the vicinity of the site. Whilst on my site visit, I saw examples of dormer windows, there were none in the immediate vicinity of the site which are directly comparable to the appeal scheme, when considering the arrangement between the proposed dormer and roof to the rear extension. In any event each case must be considered on its own merits.

Conclusion

14. The front porch extension of the proposal that I have found to be acceptable is severable from the remainder of the proposal. Therefore, for all the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as it relates to the single storey front porch extension but dismissed insofar as it relates to the single storey side, rear and front extensions, first floor rear extension and the conversion of the loft space to provide habitable accommodation plus 2no. roof lights and rear dormer roof extension.

Conditions

15. I have specified the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. Conditions relating to materials are necessary to ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory. However, the conditions requiring obscure glazing of windows at first and second floor, and the restriction of permitted development rights concerning windows at first floor and above, are not necessary as this element of the scheme is dismissed.

A Denby

INSPECTOR