



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2019

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/19/3238311

Willow Cottage, Gregory Road, Hedgerley SL2 3XL

- 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 Hornby against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/19/1582/FA, dated 8 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appeal property is called both Willow Cottage and The Willows on the various appeal documents. A sign at the property says Willow Cottage, so I have used this in the site address above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located towards the end of a cul-de-sac where there is a mix of detached and semi-detached houses. Side hipped roofs and gaps at first floor level between most unattached properties allow views from the road to mature trees to the rear. Whilst not an area formally recognised as being of special character, the space between buildings and presence of vegetation help create a pleasant environment.
5. Policy HP11 of the South Bucks District Local Plan 1999 (LP) states that extensions to dwellings at first floor level should be at least 1 m from the flank boundary of the site. The proposed extension would be set 635 mm from the boundary and so, despite the 3 m gap to the side elevation of the neighbouring house, the proposal would not comply with policy HP11.
6. The extension would not be unduly prominent but would be seen from the road over the hedge to the side of the appeal property. It would result in a noticeable loss of space at first floor and roof level and obstruct views from the highway to mature trees behind the house. Also, the proximity of the extension to the side boundary would be unusual in this part of Gregory Road and would result in the appeal property appearing uncharacteristically cramped.

7. The justification to LP policy HP11 states that the requirement to provide a 1 m gap may be waived in certain cases, such as where the extension would be located next to an area of open land such as a field. In this case, the extension would be positioned next to the neighbouring house and so there is no policy basis to waive the requirement.
8. By being set back and having a hipped roof, the extension would avoid creating an obvious terracing effect, even if the neighbouring property was to be extended to the side. Also, the extension would be subordinate to and in character with the main house. However, these acceptable aspects of the design fail to address the harm that would be caused through the loss of space.
9. Some properties in the road have been extended and I have taken these into account in terms of any influence on the character and appearance of the area. I am not aware of the full circumstances behind the construction of these other extensions and in any event each scheme must be determined on its individual merits and in light of current planning policies. These other developments do not affect my conclusions in respect of the main issue.
10. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude the development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, and in this regard, it would not accord with Core Policy 8 of the South Bucks Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011, policies EP3 and H11 of the LP and the National Planning Policy Framework. These all aim, amongst other things, to ensure development protects and enhances the character and appearance of an area.

Other Matters

11. No case is made by the Council or any party that the proposal would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined under development plan policies or the Framework. I find no reason to come to a different view on the matter. The proposal would be acceptable in respect of parking provision and the effects upon living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties. Acceptability in these regards is a neutral factor in my assessment.
12. I also note the Parish Council raise no objection to the proposal. However, this and all other points raised in support of the appeal would not overcome or override my conclusion in respect of the main issue.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR