



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2019 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by Chris Hoult BA(Hons) BPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/19/3235956

Maple Tree Cottage, 9B Elmwood Park, Gerrards Cross SL9 7EP

- 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 Ashwani Chopra against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref: PL/19/0934/FA, dated 18 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'proposal involves double storey side extension, internal works, first floor extension above existing garage and loft extension.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal development on:
 - 1) the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene; and
 - 2) the living conditions of the occupiers of no.66 Fulmer Road with regard to outlook.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. The dwelling is located at the end of Elmwood Park which is characterised by modern dwellings set within spacious plots. The street scene has an open suburban character. The existing building is a two storey dwelling with a hipped roof. The garage is located forward of the host dwelling and is connected by a link building to it. The dwelling is located in the corner of a relatively modern estate that has been constructed to the rear of older dwellings that front Fulmer Road. Because of this unusual layout the long side elevation of the dwelling runs alongside the rear of the plots along Fulmer Road, close to the plot boundary with no. 66.

5. The proposed extension would provide accommodation above the ground floor for the garage and the link building. A two storey side extension would be constructed which would also be located within the existing footprint of the building and the rear conservatory would be replaced. Two dormer windows are proposed on the rear of the building and another is proposed above the garage. A number of rooflights are proposed on both the front and rear elevation of the host dwelling and the link building. The proposed materials would match those used in the host dwelling and the appearance of the extension would be similar in style and detailing to the host building.
6. The existing garage and the link building are approximately half the height of the host dwelling and is a linked single storey extension. Because of the proposed increase in height of the garage and the link building and inclusion of a dormer window above the garage, the proposal would create a large flank extension forward of the main elevation that would extend almost the full width of the driveway and would increase the visible depth of the host dwelling. It would in effect create a large two storey L shaped building.
7. The proposed side extension to the main dwelling would extend the ridge width and would retain the hipped roof. Whilst this element of the proposal would unbalance the host dwelling, with the central projection appearing off centre and the loss of the second chimney, this would cause limited harm to the appearance of the host dwelling. The proposed side extension, rear dormer windows, rooflights and conservatory would not be particularly visible from the public domain as they would be located away from the road and as such it would not harm the character and appearance of the street scene. These elements of the proposal would appear proportionate to the host dwelling and consequently would not harm its appearance.
8. I accept that the proposed extension would not increase the footprint of the building but because of the mass of built form above the garage and link building, that element of the proposal would be subsumed into the host dwelling and this would unbalance the symmetry of the host dwelling. Whilst the proposed ridge height of the extension above the link building would be below the host dwelling, the proposed extension would still be around 6 metres tall, which is the same height as a small two storey dwelling. As such the proposal would have the appearance of a deep two storey front extension which would significantly increase the scale of the host dwelling. It would unbalance its appearance viewed as a whole and would appear out of character within the street scene.
9. The appellant has referred to an appeal that was allowed for a dwelling near to the site. The dwelling has since been completed and that dwelling has a similar forward extension as has been proposed as part of this appeal. Nevertheless, the forward extension does not extend as far out from the front elevation of the building, with most of the extension used as a garage with a small link between the two buildings. The height of the forward extension also appears proportionate to the host dwelling. Notwithstanding this, whilst there were concerns regarding outlook and privacy in that appeal, they were in relation to the main dwelling and not the forward projection.
10. The South Bucks District Council Residential Design Guide Development Plan Document (DPD) notes that in low density areas a greater separation distance should be provided. The street scene is characterised by large dwellings in

spacious plots and as a result of this dwellings are typically not built up against the rear boundary of neighbouring dwellings. The proposal would result in development built near to the shared boundary along the rear of the garden for no.66 which would appear out of character within the street scene.

11. Therefore, while the proposed extension to the side of the host dwelling would appear proportionate, the proposed first floor extension above the garage and link building would create a disproportionately large and prominent extension to the host dwelling which would harm its character and appearance and that of the street scene. The proposal would be contrary to policy EP3 and H11 of the South Bucks District Local Plan (1999) (LP) and the guidance contained within Appendix 8 of the LP. The proposed development would also be contrary to The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) in so far as it seeks to promote good design in residential development.

Living conditions

12. The existing garage and dwelling are partially visible from the garden for no.66 Fulmer Road with the link building hidden by the fence, trees and hedgerows that bound the garden. The existing garage and link building are approximately 1 metre from the boundary of no.66, although this does vary along the boundary. The proposed extension would increase the height of the link building above the boundary treatment to around 6 metres in height and would extend almost the full width of the garden. As such the entirety of the proposed extension would be visible from the garden for no.66, which would significantly change the outlook for occupiers who currently have a relatively unobscured view given the limited height of the existing extension.
13. The garden for no.66 appeared well maintained and had a large patio area and because there are no other usable outdoor areas associated with no.66 that I saw on my visit the occupiers of that dwelling likely use the garden on a regular basis. The garden is of limited depth but quite wide and as such the rear of the garden is the main outlook when using it and is therefore the most sensitive to development beyond the plot boundary.
14. The proposed extension would be a considerably taller building than the existing extension. The building has already been built up against the boundary of the garden and because of the proposed increase in height it would significantly alter the outlook for the occupiers of the dwelling. The combined height and length of the extension would appear overbearing and create a significant sense of enclosure when viewed from the garden area of the neighbouring property. The extension would for the most part appear as a large single blank elevation. Combined with the height of the proposal it would appear oppressive and utilitarian when viewed from the garden. Regardless of the vegetative screening provided, the trees and hedgerows required to block views of the extension would also appear overbearing given the height they would have to be to screen the extension.
15. Whilst the separation distances between the proposed extension and the dwelling at no.66 would meet those suggested in the DPD, the orientation of the garden and the layout of the wider development means that, in this instance, adherence to the guidance in the DPD would not protect the living conditions of the occupiers. The DPD provides general guidance and the standards set out within it might not always be suitable, as in this instance.

16. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would result in a loss of outlook when viewed from the rear garden of no.66. Consequently, I conclude that it would harm the living conditions of the occupiers of no.66, contrary to the aims of policies EP3 and H11 of the LP and policy CP8 of the South Bucks Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2011) and The Framework.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I too agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

C M Hoult

INSPECTOR