
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 May 2020

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc(Hons) DipTP Cert(Urb) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/20/3244407

17 Park Lane, Beaconsfield HP9 2HR

- 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 Kerry Collinge against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/19/1135/FA, dated 28 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey rear extension, a detached garden room, the replacement of all existing windows with uPVC to match existing style and a new dormer loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the erection of a single storey rear extension, the replacement of all existing windows with uPVC to match existing style and a new dormer loft conversion. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the detached garden room in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/19/1135/FA, dated 28 March 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 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The detached garden room hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 17 Park Lane Rev A titled "Proposed Plans" (excluding rear extension, replacement windows and loft extension details) and 17 Park Lane Rev A titled "Proposed Elevations" (excluding rear extension, replacement windows and loft extension details).

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or the appearance of the Beaconsfield Old Town Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a two storey semi-detached dwelling with second floor accommodation within the roof and a rear shared two storey outrigger. The outrigger has a single storey lean-to projection to the rear. The dwelling has an elegant Edwardian style design with a two storey bay, capped by a gable, on the frontage. It is constructed with facing brick at ground floor level, render at first floor level with ornamental timber framing and a steep pitched

plain tile roof. It is sited towards the periphery of the Beaconsfield Old Town Conservation Area.

4. The centre of Beaconsfield Old Town Conservation Area comprises commercial properties, including shops and restaurants, and residential properties along a major through fare, London Road. Properties are generally set back from the road with frontage off-street parking and some landscaping, including trees. Despite the commercial nature here, buildings are traditionally designed and mostly constructed with brick, steeply pitched roofs with clay tiles and timber windows, including sash windows and casements. On the periphery of the Conservation Area, larger residential villa type dwellings dominate such as on Park Lane.
5. Along Park Lane, many of the dwellings have been extended and altered, and there has been some recent infill development. An aerial photograph shows the rear of altered and extended dwellings along Park Lane. Nevertheless, dwellings have still retained a dominant traditional feel due to their size, materials and form with their prominent gables and steeply pitched roofs. Many of properties also have established landscaping in and around them.
6. The Beaconsfield Old Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal document (April 2008) details the appeal dwelling as an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. It is the identified architectural, aesthetic and historic qualities which make the Conservation Area distinctive and of significance and value, and are of special interest to the Conservation Area as a whole. By reason of its traditional architecture, materials and form, the appeal property would contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
7. The Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2008 states that dormer windows should respect the size and design of the roof of the dwelling and that oversized dormer windows which dominate the roof slope and appear overbearing will be resisted. The proposed rear dormer/roof extension would comprise a flat-roofed L-shaped addition to the roof which would be clad in tiles to match the existing roof. It would be below the ridge of the both the main and outrigger roofs.
8. However, both its main roof and outrigger sections would be of substantial width and depth covering much of the rear roof slope and this would result in considerable scale and bulk. The proposal would also result in a flat roof, with lantern roof light projecting slightly above, and an expanse of hanging tiles on a vertical surface. Such a box-like design would be incompatible with the traditional character and appearance of the dwelling and area, where steeply pitched roof forms mostly prevail. In relation to the other attached semi-detached dwelling, the proposed roof extension would detrimentally unbalance the existing symmetry of the pair because the neighbouring dwelling has largely retained its original form.
9. Along Park Lane, the dwellings mainly take the form of traditional steeply pitched roofs whilst dormers are small with pitched roof elements above. At nearby April Cottage, there is an extensive flat roof over the middle part of this dwelling and further along Park Lane heading out of the Conservation Area, a dwelling has a frontage flat-roofed dormer. However, these are the exceptions to the predominant roof and dormer designs in the vicinity. In any case, the flat-roofed building is partially hidden by virtue of an upward sloping mono-

- pitched roof around it whilst the flat-roofed dormer is smaller than that proposed.
10. The proposed rear extension would be designed to accommodate clay roof tiles, to match existing, and conservation style roof lights with minimal protrusion above the roof plane. However, the extension would extend back significantly from the rear face of the main part of the dwelling and wrap around the end of the outrigger. One side of the extension would have a depth greater than that of the main part of the dwelling whilst the other side of the extension would have a depth greater than that of the outrigger. The extension's shallow roof pitch and flat roof behind would visually jar with the steep and traditional roof pitches of the dwelling. Therefore, the extension would appear disproportionately sized and disharmonious with the existing dwelling in terms of size and design.
 11. The extensions would be partially screened by the main dwelling and retention of hedgerow along the common boundary with a neighbouring property. Nevertheless, there is a gap between the appeal dwelling and its neighbour from the road from which the extensions' discordant size and design would be apparent. The extensions would also result in permanent features with long term impacts on the character and appearance of the area which would be noticeable to the occupants of surrounding properties to the rear as well as the existing and future occupants of the extended dwelling.
 12. In this respect, the extensions would not be of a high design quality and yet the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. For all the above reasons, the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
 13. The Framework makes clear, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
 14. In accordance with the Framework, the type of harm identified above would be less than substantial for the extensions. It is necessary that this identified harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this regard, the existing accommodation would be upgraded for modern family needs for existing and future generations. A frontage rooflight could be constructed without need for planning permission and under the proposal, the alternative conservation style rooflight would be an improvement of what otherwise could be built.
 15. However, the accommodation benefits would be small by reason of the proposal being small-scale relating to an existing single dwelling and mainly benefitting the private occupiers. The benefit of the improved rooflight would be limited by the minimal size of this feature. The benefits also have to be weighed against the adverse impact on the significance of the Conservation Area for which considerable importance and weight is attached. For all these reasons, the harm to the significance of the Conservation Area would therefore outweigh the scheme's benefits.

16. The proposed garden room would be located to the rear and close to existing trees. However, it would be a small-scale structure replacing an existing outbuilding, largely covering its footprint, and would not require any significant foundations other than a level base. Therefore, harm to the trees, especially their roots, would be unlikely to result and their visual amenity value would not be adversely affected.
17. Notwithstanding this, the overall development would not be of a high standard of design and would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole for the reasons indicated. Accordingly, it would be contrary to the policies EP3, H11 and C1 of the South Bucks District Local Plan (LP) 1999. The proposal would also be contrary to the guidance of the SPD.

Conclusion

18. The development would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in conflict with the referred policies of the LP and the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. Material considerations would not be of sufficient weight or importance to determine that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan and therefore planning permission should be refused.
19. However, the erection of a detached garden room on the site is acceptable and is severable from the proposed extensions and alterations to the dwelling. Therefore, a split decision in this case is warranted. In respect of the garden room, a condition detailing approved plans is necessary for the avoidance of doubt and to allow for applications for minor material amendments.
20. The replacement windows on the main dwelling have been indicated to be permitted development. However, the purpose of this appeal is not to determine this and as such, this is not before me to consider. There are no objections in principle to the windows but a split decision is not possible as they relate to the upgrading of the accommodation which the extensions are part of. As such, such development is not clearly severable from this main part of the proposal and a separate decision on this cannot be made.
21. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as it relates to the garden store but dismissed insofar as it relates to the single storey rear extension, new dormer loft conversion and replacement windows.

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR