



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 September 2020

by Guy Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/20/3254837

2 The Close, Ascot SL5 8EJ

- 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 J Talafair against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application 20/00195/FUL, dated 11 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is two storey side/rear and single storey front/rear extensions, and loft conversion with rear dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site sits on the corner of The Close, a cul-de-sac of semi-detached houses, with Fernbank Road, a broader straight road with pavements and verges on either side. Buildings are generally set back from the road frontage of Fernbank Road so that trees in the front and side gardens of properties dominate views along this stretch of the road, giving it a verdant and open feel. There is one property, 35 Fernbank Road, that projects closer to the road, but it appears to be of an earlier age to most other buildings along the road and is an exception to the general character and position of buildings fronting Fernbank Road.
4. The proposed development would project the two-storey element of the extension to within 1 metre of the side boundary making the building much more prominent when viewed from Fernbank Road. While there would remain a verge between the site and the road on which there are some trees, in my view the two storey element of the scheme would appear obtrusive and its siting would run counter to the form of development along the road where buildings are generally set back allowing trees and other foliage to dominate views along Fernbank Road.

5. There is an extant planning permission for one and two storey side and rear extensions¹ to the appeal property. While this is substantial in its own right, the appeal scheme would extend the building yet further towards the side boundary at two-storey level with the consequent harm I have identified above. The difference between the extant permission and appeal proposal is small, but I consider it would nevertheless materially worsen the impact on views along Fernbank Road.
6. I also have concerns about the design of the building. Part of the design involves a flat roofed two storey element that would project rearwards. This element would have a tiled upstand, but in my view that would not hide its essentially flat roofed form, which would be at odds with the fully pitched and hipped main roof. The roof would also be dominated by two large flat roof dormers.
7. I note that these features also exist in the extant planning permission. That was a decision taken by the Council. However, I consider it important that new development is well designed, and in the case of domestic extensions these respect the form and design of the host building. Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. I consider the size of the extension in relation to the existing building, and the design of the rear two storey element described above, to fail this guidance.
8. I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, and as a result conflict with Policy ENV20 of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan, Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the Bracknell Forest Council Design Supplementary Planning Document which, amongst other criteria, require new development to be in sympathy with the character and appearance of the local environment and appropriate in scale, mass, design, materials, layout and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views.

Other Matters

9. The reason for refusal criticises the reduction in parking space and lack of bin storage. However, sufficient parking space would remain on the forecourt of the property, and domestic bins could be stored in the rear garden and wheeled out when needed, as is common for residential properties of this type. I see no harm arising from either of these elements of the scheme, but that does not alter my view on the main issue.
10. I acknowledge that the scheme was recommended for approval but refused by the Planning Committee. I have favoured the Committee's views for the reasons given above.
11. The appellant has drawn attention to the size and proximity of extensions on other properties in The Close to their side boundaries. However, these extensions do not have the same prominence or relationship as the appeal proposal with Fernbank Road. Different considerations therefore apply.
12. I note that the appellant's wife has a pre-existing health condition. While I am sympathetic to her needs, there is no evidence why the form of the extension

¹ 19/00203/FUL.

proposed in the appeal scheme is essential to meet that personal need. In any event, built development is likely to remain long after personal circumstances change, and therefore I give this issue little weight.

Conclusion

13. I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR