



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 October 2020

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14/10/2020

Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/D/20/3249194

The Squirrels, Winkers Close, Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire SL9 0AH

- 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 Andrew Butler against the decision of Chiltern District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/19/3826/FA, dated 19 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is a garage conversion to create a granny annexe with front dormer window to the existing pitched roof; and a detached double garage to the front driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a garage conversion to create a granny annexe with front dormer window to the existing pitched roof; and a detached double garage to the front driveway at The Squirrels, Winkers Close, Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire SL9 0AH in accordance with the terms of the application ref PL/19/3826/FA, dated 19 August 2019, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: location plan at 1:1250 scale and drawing nos. 671.01, 671.02, 671.03 R1, 671.04, and 671.05 R1.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The Squirrels is situated on a corner plot, facing Winkers Close. Winkers Close comprises a short highway loop which encircles a belt of tall trees. The Squirrels, along with most other properties in the area, is a substantial, individually designed detached dwelling, which sits well back from the road, on a large, landscaped plot. The locality is designated by the Council as an Established Residential Area of Special Character.

4. The Chiltern Residential Extensions and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document 2013 ('SPD') sets out that garages should be modest in size and subordinate in scale to the host dwelling, particularly when sited in front of it. It continues that in areas characterised by open frontages which are clear of built form, forward siting is unlikely to be acceptable as it would disrupt the local pattern of development.
5. Whilst there is a garage close to the road to the side of Dovetails, most properties in the immediate area have front gardens which are free from garages or outbuildings. That said, this proposed garage would be set well back from the road and only just forward of the host dwelling. It would be modest in size and scale, clearly subservient to the host, and would be partially screened behind a frontage hedgerow. As a result, it would not be prominent from the highway.
6. Moreover, given the short length of Winkers Close and its central tree belt, there are only limited streetscene views. When seen from Upway, or from Winkers Lane beyond, the garage would be on the far boundary of the plot. Views of it would thus be fairly distant, and it would be set amongst landscaping.
7. Consequently, the proposed garage would not appear as a dominant or incongruous feature, and it would not harm the local pattern of development or the area's distinctive character. As a result, an undesirable precedent would not be set.
8. The Council's decision refers to Policies GC1, H13(ii) and H20 of the Chiltern District Local Plan 1997 (including alterations adopted 2001, consolidated 2007 and 2011), Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District 2011, and Policy H6 of the Chalfont St Peter Neighbourhood Plan 2013–2028.
9. Amongst other things, and in general terms, they require a high design standard, and development that reflects and reinforces the characteristics of the area and contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to matters including the scale and siting of buildings relative to the road and to the host property, and the impact on the streetscene. For the reasons above, the scheme would not conflict with those policies, nor with the stance in the SPD.
10. Turning to the matter of conditions, I have considered those suggested by the Council against the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework. I have imposed the standard time limit condition and, in the interests of certainty, a condition requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Additionally, in the interests of good design, a condition is necessary requiring that the development be faced with matching materials.
11. The visual impact of the proposed works to create a granny annexe would be very modest, and I conclude that neither that, nor the proposed double garage, would harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR