

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 8 October 2020

by Simon Shapland BSc (Hons) MSc CMILT MCIHT

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/20/3252393

23 Edgumbe Park Drive, Crowthorne, RG45 6HU

- 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 Mrs A Goddard against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 200682, dated 13 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear and 1st floor side extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey rear and 1st floor side extensions at 23 Edgumbe Park Drive, Crowthorne, RG45 6HU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 200682, dated 13 March 2020, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling located in a residential area. The existing dwelling benefits from first floor accommodation set within the roof space, with a dormer window which faces the neighbouring property of 25 Edgumbe Park Drive. The dwelling is set back a fair distance from the edge of the highway, and it was evident from my site visit that the locality of the appeal site is heavily landscaped, with significant mature trees which dominate the street scene. This gives the locality of the appeal site a pleasing verdant nature, characterised by large detached dwellings set back from the highway.
4. The design of dwellings in the vicinity of the appeal site is varied, and includes both two storey and single storey dwellings. Furthermore, it is apparent that a number of dwellings in the locality of the appeal site have undergone sizable extensions. This includes the neighbouring property of No.21 Edgumbe Park Drive. The result is a varied street scene, with no defined uniformity design style to the dwellings.
5. The appeal proposal is for a first floor side extension which would extend approximately 6.45 metres towards the neighbouring property of No.21 Edgumbe Park Drive. This element of the extension would have a ridge height which is lower than the roof of the main dwelling. In addition, there would be a single storey rear extension with flat roof.

6. The Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) states that for residential extensions, these should be clearly subservient to the form and scale of the original building. However, there may be some exceptions where it is more appropriate to design a seamless continuation. It further states that side extensions should be set back from the building line by 1 metre, and should be set at least 1 metre from the plot boundary.
7. In this instance, the proposal would not be set in by at least 1 metre from the boundary of the neighbouring property, furthermore the ridge height of the extension would only have a small step down from the main roof. However, the resultant extension results in a pleasing design which, in my view, complements the design of the original house well. The side extension is set back from the front building line of the dwelling, and the small step down of the ridge height does give the extension a degree of subservience. The use of dormer windows on the side extension is a feature which is common in the vicinity of the appeal site, and is a design feature which relates to the host dwelling.
8. Whilst the proposal would not maintain a 1 metre separation distance with the boundary of the neighbouring dwelling, there would be a single storey flat roof garage adjacent to the boundary of the appeal site. Visually, this means that there would still remain a good visual break between the two dwellings. Furthermore, whilst I appreciate the concerns of the Council that currently mature vegetation is visible over the roof of the existing garage and sun room, this would still be visible from the street scene by virtue of the reduced height of the neighbouring flat roof garage.
9. Furthermore, it was apparent from my site visit that the backdrop to these properties is mainly characterised by impressive mature trees which given their height are clearly visible above the current roofs. In this case the extension would not impede the views of these trees which would still be visible above the roof of the extension, and thus the proposal would not interrupt these views and would not detract from the landscape setting.
10. The council have raised concerns that the proposal introduces a flat roof element which is not in keeping with the character of the area. I do not find this to be the case. The existing garage and sun roof both have flat roofs, and the host dwelling also has a flat roof porch. There are a number of garages in the locality which include flat roofs, and thus this is clearly a design feature which is prevalent in the vicinity of the appeal site. Moreover, the majority of the flat roof element would be towards the rear of the dwelling where it would not be overly visible from the public realm.
11. Whilst the proposal would represent a large addition to the host dwelling, I am satisfied that the design would not be of a scale which represents an excessive addition to the host dwelling. In my view, the design of the proposal would be in keeping with both the existing dwelling and the character of the surrounding area.
12. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, there is no conflict with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (CS), the National Planning Policy Framework and SPG. Together these seek, amongst other things, that development is of a high quality design that

maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment and is appropriate to the character of the area.

Other matters

13. I note the concerns of interested parties that they consider the proposal to be excessive in size, which would be overbearing to neighbouring occupiers. Of particular concern is the relationship with No.25 Edgcumbe Park Drive which due to the orientation and tapering of the gardens would be in close proximity to the proposed single storey rear extension. Given the proposed height of this rear extension, I am satisfied that this would not appear as overbearing, nor lead to a sense of enclosure to this neighbouring property. I note that the Council have not raised any concerns in this respect.

Conditions

14. The Council have suggested several conditions and it has been necessary to amend these in the interest of precision. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This is in the interest of certainty. A condition relating to external materials is necessary to ensure that the appearance of the proposal would be satisfactory.
15. I have imposed a condition requiring the dormer window which faces No.25 Edgcumbe Park Drive to be obscure glazed. This is to safeguard the living conditions of the neighbouring occupier. A condition relating to the use of the proposed garage is necessary to ensure that adequate car parking space is provided on site, in the interests of highway safety.

Conclusions

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S Shapland

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS – APP/X0360/D/20/3252393

- 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: Site Location Plan, Site Block Plan, Existing Plans & Elevations dated 17/9/2019, Proposed Plans & Elevations Rev B dated 13/3/2020, Tree Protection Plan dated August 2019.
- 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
- 4) The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the dormer window facing No.25 Edgcumbe Park Drive has been fitted with obscured glazing, and no part of that window that is less than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which it is installed shall be capable of being opened. Details of the type of obscured glazing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the window is installed and once installed the obscured glazing shall be retained thereafter.
- 5) The garage hereby permitted shall be kept available at all times for the parking of motor vehicles by the occupants of the dwelling and their visitors and for no other purpose.