
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2020

by N Holdsworth MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/20/3252594

6 Langley Lane, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 0NA

- 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 A Saunders against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref CR/2019/0922/FUL, dated 12 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is removal of conservatory, construction of new ground floor extension and first floor attic bedrooms, revised parking on site.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for removal of conservatory, construction of new ground floor extension and first floor attic bedrooms, revised parking on site, at 6 Langley Lane, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 0NA in accordance with application Ref: CR/2019/0922/FUL, dated 12 December 2019, but subject to the attached schedule of conditions.

Main Issues

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area, which falls within the Ifield Village Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The Ifield Village Conservation Area comprises a rural village settlement with medieval origins, which predates the surrounding twentieth century development associated with Crawley new town. The housing within it is of various ages and designs but generally has a more irregular, diverse and spacious character than the surrounding modern housing estates. This is apparent on Langley Lane, a predominantly residential road comprising spacious detached housing of varying ages and designs. In this context, the host building is a modern bungalow that sits between April Cottage, an older building which fronts on to the side elevation of the appeal building, and another suburban style 20th century building. Both are 2 storeys in height.
4. The proposal would expand the footprint of the building and raise its height, through the creation of a larger roof encompassing habitable living space. Consequently, it would appear as a chalet bungalow with a half-hipped roof in a traditional style. As there are other examples of similar hipped roofs along this lane, the design approach would not be out of character. The small gabled dormers facing both the front and the rear would not be dissimilar to the gable features found on the front of April Cottage. They would broadly sit in vertical alignment with the ground floor windows on the front and rear elevations of the

building, so the fenestration would be coherent. No part of the building would be unduly complex in its design.

5. The enlarged building would be of a similar height to its two immediate neighbours. A good amount of visual space would be retained to the front, sides and rear of the building, and between the extended building and each neighbouring property, preserving their respective settings. As such, the extended property would not be unduly large, even taking account of its position slightly forward of the prevailing building line. The upper floor extension would not be so close to the road as to be unduly dominant in the street scene. The extended building would have a coherent design which pays appropriate regard to the special character of Langley Lane. Overall, the irregular and spacious character of this Conservation Area would be preserved.
6. The Ifield Village Conservation Area Statement (2018) states that developments involving an extension to a non-listed building must be sympathetic to the original structure in terms of style, massing and materials. However, it also endorses new buildings that are of high-quality design and respect the character, scale and appearance of the Conservation Area. Whilst the works technically comprise an extension, were the proposal to be considered as a new building it would comply with the latter criteria as it would have an appropriate appearance in relation to its built surroundings. The Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (2016) advises that dormer windows are not normally acceptable to the front of buildings. However, in this case the design approach adopted is justified by the local context. There is no significant conflict with either of these policy documents.
7. In conclusion, there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area, which falls within the Ifield Village Conservation Area. There is no conflict with policies CH2, CH3, CH12 or CH13 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan (2015) which seek, amongst other things, to achieve good design that preserves the character and appearance of Conservation Areas within the Borough. The proposal complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to achieve well-designed places that conserve the historic environment.

Other Matters

8. The Council make reference in the officer report to two listed buildings near the application site; the old Forge Cottage and the Friends Meeting House. I agree that the separation distance is such that there would be no effect on the setting of these designated heritage assets.
9. The separation distance between the extended building and the neighbouring properties is sufficient to avoid any significant loss of light, overbearing effect or loss of privacy to their residential occupants. There are windows in the side elevation of the building at first floor level, but these are set at an angle with the roof so would not lead to significant overlooking. The windows in the front and rear of the property at first floor level are otherwise sited a sufficient distance away from other residential properties to avoid any significant loss of privacy. The proposal would have an acceptable effect on the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupants, in all respects.
10. There are concerns expressed that the building is currently used as a shared house and this use would intensify were planning permission to be granted.

However, such uses are common in residential areas. The level of occupation would not detract significantly from the prevailing residential character of the area or cause harm to the living conditions of existing residents.

11. Whilst the building would no longer function as a bungalow, the extended property would also be likely to serve a housing need. There is a well sized driveway which provides adequate parking space for future occupants. These issues were not raised by the Council in its reason for refusal and I agree that there would be no unacceptable harm in these respects. I have considered the other issues raised by interested parties, but none would justify the dismissal of the appeal.

Conclusion

12. The proposal complies with the development plan and there are no other considerations that outweigh this finding. The appeal should succeed subject to conditions necessary in the interests of certainty, to comply with statutory time periods in relation to commencement of development, and to ensure the materials used result in an appropriate appearance in relation to the Conservation Area. No other conditions are necessary to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR

Schedule of 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 plan: Drawing number S/2019/03
- 3) No works involving the construction of the extensions hereby approved shall take place until details of the external materials to be used in their construction have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved under the terms of this condition.

End of Schedule