

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 November 2020

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 November 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/20/3252183

Netherleigh, Woodland Avenue, Cranleigh, GU6 7HZ

- 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 & Mrs G & N Privett against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WA/2019/2132, dated 23 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is a new two storey detached dwelling, including outbuilding and associated landscaping, following demolition of existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider the main issues to be the effects of the proposal on the:
 - character and appearance of the locality; and
 - living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a sizeable rectangular plot fronting a quiet residential avenue and presently accommodating an unremarkable two storey home with attached garaging all set at an unusual angle to the road frontage. Development locally is of established character with generally large varied dwellings in substantial plots and generous landscape all leading to an air of spaciousness and an overall environment of high quality.
4. The appeal scheme is as described above. The new 4 bedroomed dwelling with study would be 17.2 metres wide at its maximum, 14m in depth and 8.7m in height with a crown roof over part.

Character and appearance

5. As I note above the locality is one of relatively large homes with a mix of designs. Most of these however have a degree of subtlety in their appearance, provide some noticeable sense of separation, and have roof forms which whilst sizeable are not awkward or unduly bulky. Regrettably I consider that the appeal scheme would be in contrast to this and would not sit comfortably in its context and would be jarring on the eye. The planned building would be of substantial and symmetrical elevations not in accord with surrounding development and of undue prominence. The height would be above
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neighbouring dwellings and substantial two storey elements would run relatively close to side boundaries. Furthermore, the roof form would be out of kilter with the local norm by its extent and it topping a building which was excessively deep. It would be bulky and top heavy not least because of the uncharacteristic flat roofed element at upper level; this roof would not display visual finesse. In short, in this locality, this over-ambitious scheme would simply lack suitable refinement of design and would represent alien overdevelopment with its incongruity materially harmful to the street scene and the aesthetic of the area.

6. Taken together and amongst other matters retained Policies D1 and D4 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 (LP) and Policy TD1 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan (Part One) 2018 are concerned with ensuring that development is of high quality design, protects the character and appearance of an area, and reflects local distinctiveness. Given the above I conclude that there would be conflict with these policies on this main issue.

Living conditions for neighbours

7. The locality does not have a rigid rear building line and some sideways intervisibility from 'patio areas' of gardens and rear windows is not an unusual occurrence. However in a neighbourhood of this quality and spaciousness it would not be unreasonable to expect a comfortable degree of separation to side boundaries, suitable massing, no excessive rear projection, and a lack of any built form relationship which could be seen as overbearing. Unfortunately the appeal proposal would fail on all these counts. Notwithstanding the existing pattern of window disposition and room arrangement the residents of Winterbourne would have an unreasonable imposition from the planned building. This would be in terms of outlook from nearest windows and during use of the most proximate part of the rear garden. The appeal proposal would simply be too dominant in this context; the scheme would be unneighbourly.
8. Retained Policy D1 of the LP is also relevant under this issue. It seeks to secure development that would not lead to a loss of general amenity. I conclude that there would be conflict with this policy in this regard as living conditions for neighbours would be markedly harmed.

Other matters

9. I have carefully considered all the other matters drawn to my attention by interested parties. However none of these add to my reasons for dismissing the appeal.
10. I have fully reviewed the instances of replacement or extended dwellings which have been drawn to my attention by the Appellants and acknowledge the points made in respect of those properties. However I do not accept that any precedents have been set given the difference in scale, layout, design or positioning which is apparent. Furthermore I did observe one or two unfortunate examples locally which in character and appearance terms would be regrettable benchmarks. In any event I must determine the case before me on its own merits. The existing property is an anomaly in terms of positioning and does offer scope for excessive overlooking of neighbours as well as proffering little positive to the streetscene but these characteristics do not justify approval of the appeal scheme. The creation of an energy efficient new home would also be a benefit, albeit not an over-riding one.

11. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellants but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issues identified above.
12. I confirm that all relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on character and appearance of the locality and on living conditions for neighbours. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR