

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 November 2020

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/D/20/3258369

1 Glenmore Gardens, Abbots Langley, WD5 0SN

- 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 Fryer against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0980/FUL, dated 21 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension, single storey front and rear extensions. Part conversion of garage to habitable accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a two storey modern detached house located on the corner of Glenmore Gardens and Stewart Close. The street is characterised by a mix of mainly detached and terraced two storey houses. Front gables are a common design feature and dwellings mostly have gable ends, some of which have small feature half hips. The façade at No 1 is dominated by a forward projection with a front facing gable and a bay window at ground floor, giving the main dwelling a vertical emphasis. The wide, forward projecting double garage unbalances the dwelling as a whole but, due to its single storey height, remains a subservient element.
 4. The proposed first floor extension would be above most of the width of the garage. It would project forward of the main façade by a significant degree. The pitched roof would fail to align with the existing main roof and its ridge would project above the eaves height on the main side elevation, giving it an awkward juxtaposition. Moreover, it would finish with a full hipped end which would be out of character with both the original roof of the host dwelling and the street scene. I do not find fault with the small gables above the proposed windows
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since similar gables are seen elsewhere in Glenmore Gardens, including at No 9 which can be seen together with the appeal dwelling, and they are therefore in keeping with the existing street scene.

5. Nevertheless, the first floor extension taken as a whole would, owing to its width, forward projection and awkward, uncharacteristic roof form, be a dominant and unsympathetic addition that would draw attention away from the principle features of the existing house, detract from its vertical emphasis and fail to blend with the original design.
6. The proposed single storey front extension would be to the existing porch which lies between the garage and the gabled forward projection. The roof would have a forward facing gable which would be in keeping with other dwellings and acceptable in principle. However, the height, width and forward projection would make the porch an oversized and unsympathetic addition that would cut into and project well in front of the gabled front projection and extend up almost to the cill of the window above.
7. Overall the proposed first floor side and single storey front extensions would amount to poorly designed additions that would visually jar with the host dwelling and street scene, thereby materially detracting from their character and appearance.
8. The rear elements of the proposed extensions would be modest in scale, unseen from the front of the dwelling and only visible in the street scene against the larger side elevation of the existing dwelling. I therefore find these acceptable. In addition, the Council does not object to the conversion of part of the existing garage to habitable space, including the replacement of one garage door with a window in the front elevation. I agree that this would also be acceptable.
9. The appellants point out that the first floor side extension would be set in from the side boundary, back from the front of the garage and would have a lower ridge and eaves height than the existing dwelling. On this basis they suggest that the extension would be subservient to the host dwelling. However, these matters would not outweigh the poor design of the extension which prevents it from integrating successfully with the original dwelling or compensate for its significant forward projection beyond the existing main façade. I cannot therefore agree that it would not lead to material harm.
10. With respect to the porch, the appellants suggest this would be contemporary. In terms of design that may be so. Nevertheless, it would be noticeably out of proportion with the host dwelling and hence appear oddly out of place.
11. It is concluded on the main issue that the proposed first floor side and single storey front extensions would as a result of their scale, design and relationship with the host dwelling have a materially detrimental effect on its character and appearance and that of the surrounding street scene. In consequence, they would conflict with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy, 2011, Policy DM1 and Appendix 2 of the Development Management Policies Local Development Document, 2013, and with the National Planning Policy Framework which, taken together, expect residential extensions to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and design and respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene so as to avoid a gradual deterioration in the quality of the built environment.

12. The appellants suggest that a larger extension could, subject to prior approval, be built using permitted development (PD) rights and that this represents a realistic fallback. That may be so. However, it is not before me to assess what might be permissible under PD and no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that a larger prior approval scheme would be acceptable. This matter therefore carries limited weight and would not alter or outweigh my findings on the main issue.
13. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the generous size of the rear garden at the appeal site, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR