



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 October 2020

by A Denby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/20/3250164

4 Orchard Close, Hughenden Valley, HP14 4PR

- 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 Randall against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/07979/FUL, dated 11 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is two-storey rear extension and single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. On the 1 April 2020, Wycombe District Council (WDC) merged, along with other Councils, into a new single Unitary Authority called Buckinghamshire Council. Whilst the original decision was issued by WDC, the authority's new name has been referred to in the banner heading above.
3. The site is located within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and partially within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is not a matter in dispute between the parties that the proposed development is not inappropriate and I have determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host property; and
 - the living conditions of existing occupiers of No 6 Orchard Close, with particular regard to outlook, sunlight and daylight.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The site comprises a detached dwelling located within a primarily residential area. The dwelling is set back from its frontage and at a higher ground level than the road. The appeal scheme consists of a single storey extension to the side and a two-storey extension to the rear. The existing dwelling is located within a large plot and the proposals would retain space to the site boundaries.

6. The proposed two-storey extension would however be a substantial addition. It would be the same width as the existing dwelling and due to its depth and overall bulk, particularly its double pitched roof with gable ends, it would obscure the rear of the existing property and be an imposing and dominant addition.
7. Whilst the proposal would not significantly alter the appearance of the frontage of the dwelling, I saw on my site visit that there are some public views of the side gables and rear of the site. Although limited, the two-storey extension would be similarly visible, and its substantial bulk and scale would be discernible from the street.
8. I note the appellant's comments in relation to the application of criteria within the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Householder Planning and Design Guidance, 2020 (SPD). However, in relation to achieving good design the SPD is clear that extensions should not dominate or detract from the original building and be subservient in scale, mass and bulk to the original dwelling. As detailed above, this would not be the case with the appeal scheme.
9. The proposed extension would be a dominant addition and compete visually with the scale of the host property having an unacceptable harmful impact on its character and appearance. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies DM35 and DM36 of the Wycombe District Local Plan, 2019 (LP) which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development achieves a high-quality design, being subservient to and respecting the character and appearance of the existing property. It would also fail to achieve the high-quality design requirements of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Living conditions

10. No 6 Orchard Close is located to the west of the appeal site and there are habitable room windows to the rear elevation, in close proximity to the site boundary. The two-storey extension would extend significantly beyond the rear of No 6, and result in a large flank wall and substantial roof form, in close proximity to the site boundary. Due to its overall size and bulk the extension would be a dominant feature in outward views from No 6 and its rear patio area.
11. In addition, due to the orientation of the site in relation to No 6, there would be a significant impact on the sunlight and daylight to the existing habitable room windows. Whilst these rooms appear to have a dual aspect, with another source of light to the front of the property, those windows are on the north elevation. The rooms are also large, spanning the full depth of the property and I therefore consider there would be more reliance on sunlight and daylight from the windows to the rear elevation.
12. The proposal would also result in significant levels of shading to the rear garden of No 6. This would particularly impact the patio area, which as it is paved and directly adjacent to the dwelling, would likely be used more regularly throughout the year. I saw on my site visit that whilst the appeal site is at a lower ground level, the difference is not so significant that it would address the harm I have identified.

13. It is acknowledged that the appeal scheme would adhere to certain aspects of the SPD, such as 45-degree sightlines, though the SPD only sets out guiding principles for development and not prescriptive design criteria. Achieving the minimum criteria does not necessarily equate to an acceptable development and each site needs to be considered on its own merits. The SPD does however state that a primary aim for all development is to ensure impacts to neighbouring properties are minimised.
14. The proposed extension would be a visible, dominant feature and result in a sense of enclosure when viewed from No 6 and its rear garden area. Overall, the appeal scheme would result in harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 6 from an unacceptable overbearing impact and loss of sunlight and daylight.
15. On the basis of the above the proposed development would be contrary to LP Policy DM36 which seeks to ensure that development preserves the amenities of neighbouring properties. For the same reasons the proposals would fail to achieve the high standard of amenity for existing users required by Paragraph 127f) of the Framework.
16. The appellant has drawn my attention to a previous scheme approved by the Council for a two-storey extension to the rear of the appeal site as a potential fall-back. The appeal scheme would be similar in terms of its overall design, though it would have a greater depth than the previous scheme. Whilst the difference in the depth may not appear significant it would, due to the overall size and design of the extension, spanning the width of the existing property and with substantial roof form, result in an extension of even greater bulk that, as detailed above, would appear disproportionate to the original dwelling.
17. Furthermore, the additional depth would increase the dominance of the extension in outward views from No 6, and the impact on daylight and sunlight. The previous scheme was considered prior to the adoption of the LP and SPD and the appeal scheme would have a greater impact than that previously approved. Therefore, having considered the proposal on its own merits, I do not find that any such fall-back position provides justification for overcoming the harm I have identified.
18. There were no objections from the ward councillor, Parish Council or statutory consultees though this does not weigh in favour of the appeal. The proposal would provide for improved living accommodation for the appellant, though I am mindful that this benefit would be personal to the appellant and would not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Denby

INSPECTOR