
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 February 2021

by Adrian Hunter BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/20/3260589

1 Kirton Farm Cottages, Pingewood, Reading RG30 3UW

- 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 David Norman against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00929/HOUSE, dated 16 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is two storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The appellant has included additional documents and information as part of their appeal. Whilst not before the Council at the time of their decision, they were submitted at the outset of the appeal and therefore parties have had the opportunity to comment. The main elements of the scheme have not altered from that originally submitted and upon which consultation took place. Against this backdrop, no injustice would be caused to any appeal party or third party by my taking this information into account. I have considered the appeal on this basis.
3. Reason for refusal two relates to the failure to provide a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). This has now been undertaken, and an FRA was submitted with the appeal documentation. The Council have confirmed they have considered this additional information and concluded that, subject to conditions, they now have no objection on flooding grounds. I am also satisfied that the FRA does now adequately deal with flooding matters. On this basis, it is considered that reason for refusal two, as set out in the Decision Notice, has been overcome.
4. Reason for refusal three relates to insufficient information in relation to ecology matters. I note that further survey work has now been undertaken and a supplementary report submitted with this appeal. The Council have confirmed they have considered this additional information and concluded that, subject to conditions, they now have no objection on ecological grounds. I am also satisfied that the additional information does now adequately deal with ecology matters. On this basis, it is considered that reason for refusal three, as set out in the Decision Notice, has been overcome.
5. I note that the appellant has highlighted discrepancies within the Council's assessment with regards to the length of the proposed extension. For clarity, I

have based my assessment on the plans submitted alongside the appeal documentation.

Main issues

6. The main issues in this appeal are:

- The effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area; and
- The effect of the proposal upon the living conditions of No 2 Kirton Farm Cottages.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal property comprises a semi-detached, two storey cottage. The dwelling is set within a reasonably sized plot, which includes a number of detached outbuildings. The adjoining dwelling sits within a considerably larger plot and has been substantially extended. The surrounding area is predominately countryside and includes a number of lakes and a footpath, which runs close to the boundary of the appeal site. Within the surrounding area, there are a number of industrial units. However, despite their presence, due to intervening landscaping and lakes, the surrounding character is essentially rural.
8. Policy C6 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2006-2026 (HSA DPD) outlines that there is a presumption in favour of extensions to existing permanent dwellings within the countryside, provided that, amongst other things, the scale of the enlargement is subservient to, and designed to be in character with the original dwelling. Proposals are also required to have no adverse impact on the setting or on local rural character.
9. The proposed two storey extension would protrude a substantial distance from the existing rear line of the current building and would extend across its full width. The height of the roof would be the same as the existing host property and, on the evidence before me, the proposed footprint would be only marginally smaller than the existing dwelling.
10. As a consequence, the proposal would therefore appear as a substantial addition to the existing dwelling, with the resulting extended property appearing as a large and bulky form of development. The proposed extension would appear as the dominant form of development and, as such, it would fail to be subservient to and would be out of keeping with the existing character of the host dwelling. Furthermore, the additional height, length and size of the extension, despite the presence of the existing detached garage, fencing and landscaping, would be visible from the adjoining footpath and would appear as an intrusive form of development, out of keeping with the rural character of the area.
11. My attention has been drawn by the appellant to the additions that have been made to the adjoining property, and the aim of the appeal proposal to complement these. Be this as it may, whilst the adjoining property appears to have been substantially extended, these additions do not justify the appeal proposal, or outweigh the harm found to the character of the area. Furthermore, I note the reference from the appellant with regards to the height

of the extension being required to enable the provision of adequate internal floor to ceiling heights, however, in this regard, I have not been provided with any evidence to show that an alternative, less harmful scheme cannot be designed. I have therefore given this matter limited weight.

12. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the rural character and appearance of the area and, in this respect, would be contrary to Policies ADPP6, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (WBCS), Policies C3 and C6 of the HSA DPD and Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Living conditions

13. Policy C6 of HSA DPD identifies that development proposals should not cause significant harm to the living conditions currently enjoyed by residents of neighbouring properties. Policy CS14 of the WBCS, requires new development to demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire.
14. The proposed development would be positioned immediately along the boundary with the adjoining property. At this point, the neighbouring dwelling has a single storey extension. The proposed development would extend beyond this.
15. Evidence has been provided by the appellant to demonstrate that the proposal would not contravene the established 45degree rule to the neighbouring extension. Notwithstanding these submissions, I note that the proposed extension would be two storeys in height. It would therefore extend considerably above the existing boundary fence and the neighbouring extension. Furthermore, it would be positioned along the boundary between the two properties. As a consequence, due to the proximity, design and height of the proposed addition, it would represent a visually intrusive, overbearing and overshadowing form of development.
16. For these reasons, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents and, in this respect, would be contrary to Policy CS14 of the WBCS, Policy C6 of the HSA DPD and Paragraph 127 of the Framework.

Other matters

17. The appellant has referred me to the letter of support received from the neighbour, along with significant recent developments that have taken place in the locality. I have given these submissions due consideration, however, given the conflict I have found with the adopted policies, I do not consider that they are sufficient to justify a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

18. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Adrian Hunter

INSPECTOR