
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 February 2021

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/20/3262131

1 Myrtle Close, LIGHTWATER, GU18 5QR

- 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 Clayton Payne against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0678/FFU, dated 5 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 14th October 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey side/rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area around Myrtle Close and Shrublands Drive.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a wide-fronted detached house situated on a corner plot at the junction of Myrtle Close with Shrublands Drive. It has a detached double garage built up to the boundary with the neighbouring No 2 Myrtle Close. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing garage and the construction of a two-storey side/rear extension. This extension would be sited around 1 metre away from the boundary with No 2. It would have a full hipped roof at one end and a gable at the other.
4. Policy DM9 of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document (DPD) indicates that development will be acceptable where it meets certain design principles. These include that development should respect and enhance the local character of the environment paying particular regard to scale, materials, massing, bulk and density.
5. Design Principle B3 of the Lightwater Village Design Statement Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), indicates that, throughout the village, extensions should maintain the style, balance and character of the existing building, and be sympathetic to the scale and character of adjoining properties and the streetscene. Principle 10.1 of the Council's Residential Design Guide (RDG) indicates that extensions will be expected to be subordinate and consistent with the form, scale and architectural style and materials of the original building, while developments that are out of keeping or over-dominant will be resisted.

6. In this case, the surrounding area is typified by modern detached houses in modest plots. There is some variety in the design of the houses, although the prevailing roof design in the immediate vicinity is half-hipped, with some front gables. No 1 Myrtle Close exhibits these characteristics as does No 2 to its southern side, No 7 opposite, and No 19 Shrublands Drive to the rear. Other nearby examples include Nos 3, 6 and 7 Myrtle Close and Nos 14, 16 and 18 Shrublands Drive. The proposed extension would have a roofline at the same height as that of the main roof, but it would have a hipped roof at the southern end, and a gable at the northern end.
7. The Council contends that the proposal would represent an incongruous form of development. In particular, it indicates that the ridgeline over the proposed extension will not be set down from the main ridge, and that the roof form, comprising of a gable and a hipped roof, would not reflect the half-hipped roof over the host dwelling. Moreover, the council notes that there is an adopted footpath running adjacent to the northern boundary of the application site, and the proposal, when viewed from the north looking south, would feature a complicated series of roof slopes, gable and elevation returns giving the proposal a contrived and overdeveloped appearance.
8. I concur with the view of the Council, and I find that the extension as a whole, with regard to its scale, siting and design, would appear disconnected and unbalanced from the main house when viewed from differing angles. In addition, it would exhibit a number of design features, especially with regard to the roof, uncharacteristic of and inconsistent with its immediate surroundings. As such it would conflict with policy and guidance on design as set out in Policy DM9 of the DPD, Principle B3 of the SPD, and Principle 10.1 of the RDG.
9. The appellant contends that the extension would not add significantly to the overall scale of the house, and that other houses in the vicinity have also been extended similarly to the appeal property. I note that the proposed extension would add very little to the footprint of the dwelling, but it would be of a similar height to the main house and would extend a little further back into the plot. As such it would become much more prominent than the existing garage, especially when seen from the footpath to the north/north-east of the property and, to a lesser extent, from Myrtle Close itself. Moreover, the complex means of linking the extension to the main house would result in a somewhat over-dominating and unbalanced appearance, with an incongruous roof design.
10. With regard to other extensions in the vicinity, all appear either to continue the existing roofline and style of the house, or to be subordinate in scale whilst maintaining the key elements of the design of the existing roof. The proposed extension at No 1 would mirror the existing height of the main roof but would fail to be consistent with the form and architectural style of the original.
11. In conclusion, I find that the proposed extension would fail to respect the form and style of the existing house, and that it would, therefore, be harmful to the character and appearance of the area around Myrtle Close and Shrublands Drive. It would also conflict with policy and guidance on design as set out in Policy DM9 of the DPD, Principle B3 of the SPD, and Principle 10.1 of the RDG.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR

