



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2021

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 July 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/21/3269548

Moorlands, London Road, Wooburn Moor, High Wycombe, HP10 0NJ

- 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 D Atherton against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/07207/FUL, dated 25 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is two storey side & first floor side extension & internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development upon:
 - the character and appearance of the existing house and wider area; and,
 - the living conditions of neighbours with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is one of a group of houses which front on to the A40 and back onto the M40 motorway. Most of them are detached and are set back behind front gardens or drives that slope down from the road. The house designs vary, but most, including the appeal property, are 2 storey. A key characteristic of the street scene is the gaps between houses which allow glimpses of trees to the rear which screen them from the adjacent motorway.
4. Although the appeal property has an attached single storey garage to the side which abuts the neighbouring property, its appearance is that of a detached house because of the gap between its first floor side walls and that of the neighbouring house, Le-Nyd. There is a larger gap between the appeal property and the other neighbouring house, Barry Cottage. This allows views of the trees to the rear. The relatively narrow front elevation of the existing house, compared to its neighbours, accentuates the gaps between them.
5. The proposed development would comprise a first floor side extension over part of the garage and a two storey side extension on the other side of the house. The first floor extension would be set back from the boundary with Le-Nyd, behind the building line at the front of the property and below the existing roof

ridge. The 2 storey extension would extend across to within 1 metre of the boundary with Barry Cottage. Outbuildings to the rear of the property would be demolished to provide more garden space.

6. The layout of the proposed development is not consistent with the creation of a new dwelling as suggested by the Council. Nevertheless, the extensions would substantially alter the appearance of the house elongating the front elevation. Although they would be set below the existing ridge and set in at first floor level, to provide an element of subservience, their scale and proximity to neighbouring houses would close the gap between properties that I have identified as characteristic of the street scene. As a result, the proposed development would fill the width of the plot and appear much more dominant within the street scene than the existing house. Also, from the road approaching it would appear as a semi-detached property, paired with Le-Nyd. There would be an element of separation with Barry Cottage provided by the single storey garage to its side, but overall, I consider that the proposal would result in a cramped development out of keeping with the immediate area.
7. The examples of larger houses provided by the appellant were mostly detached, in generous plots with gaps between the houses and neighbouring properties. As such that they do not appear cramped and are not comparable to the proposal.
8. I conclude on this main issue that the proposed development would be out of character with the street scene and harm the appearance of the existing house and area and therefore conflict with Policies CP1, CP9, DM35 and DM36 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019) which require sustainable high quality development which improves the character and quality of an area. Policy DM20, listed in the reason for refusal, refers to matters relating to contaminated land, pollution, advertisements, listed building consent and telecoms. As the proposal does not relate to any of these matters it is not relevant to this issue.

Living conditions

9. The single storey flat roofed garage provides a gap at first floor level between the appeal property and Le-Nyd. This would be largely filled by the proposed first floor extension over the garage. The only window on the side elevation of Le-Nyd, that I could see during my visit, appears to serve a first floor bathroom and is obscured glazed. As such the window is not significant in providing outlook to the property's occupants. Le-Nyd also has a side door on the ground floor providing access to its rear garden. It faces the appeal property's garage wall which must already dominate views out from it. I do not consider that the proposed first floor extension side wall would appear significantly more overbearing when viewed from the side door, than the existing side walls of the appeal property.
10. The proposed 2 storey extension on the other side of the house would bring the appeal property side wall much closer to the boundary with Barry Cottage. There is what appears to be a bedroom window on the side of Barry Cottage which would look out onto the extension wall. The first floor garage adjoining the side of Barry Cottage, and a gap either side of the boundary fence between the 2 properties, would provide a significant gap between their first floor side walls. Nevertheless, the proposed extension would fill most of the field of vision when looking out of the neighbour's bedroom window. However, the bedroom

appears to be dual aspect with another window at the front of the house providing an alternative outlook which would not be harmed by the proposed development. As such, I do not consider the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to occupants of that room. Other views from the neighbouring properties would be largely unaffected by the proposal.

11. Overall, on this main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties to an extent that would justify withholding planning permission. There would therefore be no conflict with Policies CP1, CP9, DM35 and DM36 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019) which require sustainable development that preserves the amenities of neighbouring properties and land. Policy DM20, listed in the reason for refusal, refers to matters relating to contaminated land, pollution, advertisements, listed building consent and telecoms. As the proposal does not relate to any of these matters it is not relevant to this issue.

Other Matters

12. I have considered all other matters raised in support of the appeal, including the processing of the planning application and the proposed improvements to the fabric of the house and its energy performance. However, they do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

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

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR