



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 28 September 2021

by James Blackwell LLB (Hons)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/D/21/3269614

New House, Winton Hill, Stockbridge SO20 6HL

- 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 Michael O'Connor against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02846/FULLN, dated 16 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 25 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as the conversion of existing garage to provide family games room, new flat roof dormer to front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the conversion of existing garage to provide family games room, new flat roof dormer to front elevation at New House, Winton Hill, Stockbridge SO20 6HL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/02846/FULLN, dated 16 November 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings: 884/10 C (Existing & Proposed: Floor Plans, Elevations & Sections); and 884/06 B (Site Layouts).
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since determination of the planning application, the 2019 iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) has been superseded. The main parties have had the opportunity to comment on the changes. I have therefore determined this appeal with regard to the current version, published in July 2021.
3. As the appeal site is within a conservation area, as per section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

- the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area; and
- whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal property comprises a two-storey detached dwelling and separate detached garage, located on the northern side of Winton Hill. Winton Hill is predominantly residential in nature, and is characterised by large, detached dwellings of varying design, which are generally set within spacious plots. The land along the northern side of Winton Hill is set at a steep gradient, which means the dwellings along this side of the road are generally elevated from the highway.
6. The proposed development seeks physical alterations to the detached garage, in order to facilitate conversion into a family games room and office area. To accommodate the conversion, the alterations would raise the barn hip corners of the existing roof, thereby creating a gable style roof. They would also incorporate a new roof flat dormer along the front pitch of the roof which faces out on to the road. In terms of size, the footprint of the garage would remain the same. Similarly, its ridge height would not be altered.
7. Whilst the alterations from a barn hip to a gable style roof would bring the apex of the garage's roof closer to the appeal dwelling, this would only be in line with the width of the main bulk of the garage. As such, the alterations to the roof design would not materially alter the bulk nor massing of the garage's roof, and its visual impact along the road would largely remain the same. Moreover, the change from a barn hip to a gable roof would be consistent with the roof style of the main dwelling, which would help harmonise the two buildings more effectively.
8. In terms of the proposed flat roof dormer, this would clearly be inset from the ridge, sides and lowest point of the roof pitch, which means it would appear relative and subservient to the main bulk of the roof. There are already examples of front dormers along Winton Hill, including two dormers on the principal elevation of the appeal dwelling itself, and a further flat roof dormer along the frontage of Little Dean Lodge, which neighbours the appeal dwelling. Irrespective of their size, dormers are therefore already a feature of the street scene. On this basis, and given its clear subservience to the main bulk of the garage's roof, I am satisfied that the proposed dormer would not appear unduly prominent nor alien in the wider street scene.
9. Whilst I acknowledge that the combined effect of the changes to the roof structure and the introduction of the front dormer will add some minor prominence to the garage, the appeal dwelling itself will still be significantly wider, larger and more dominant. As such, the garage would still appear subservient to the main dwelling. Any additional prominence would also be mitigated by the elevated height of the appeal property when viewed from the road, as its visual impact is already heavily obscured by its steep upwards gradient.

10. For these reasons, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling nor the surrounding area. The development would therefore be consistent with Policies COM2 and E1 of the Council's Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted 2016) (Local Plan), which seek to ensure new development responds positively to local distinctiveness, and integrates with the character and appearance of the area in which it is located in terms of layout, scale, materials and building styles.

Conservation Area

11. The appeal site is located on the outer edge of the Stockbridge Conservation Area (CA), and is situated on Winton Hill which is one of the main roads in and out of Stockbridge. As highlighted above, the proposed development would help harmonise the roofs of the garage and the appeal dwelling, without appearing overly dominant or alien in the street scene. Given the substantial size of the appeal dwelling, the garage would remain visually subservient and ancillary to it. Given the existence of front dormers on both the appeal dwelling and Little Dean Lodge, the introduction of a further flat roof dormer on the front roof pitch of the garage would also be consistent with the pattern of development in the locality.
12. On this basis, I am satisfied that the proposed development preserves the character and appearance of the CA. It would therefore be consistent with Policies COM2 and E9 of the Council's Local Plan, which seek to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the special nature of heritage assets. The development would also be consistent with the objectives of the Framework (2021), which places great emphasis on the preservation of conservation areas.

Other Matters

13. Whilst I note the comments made with regard to the design of the proposed development, for the reasons outlined above, I am satisfied that the alterations would harmonise with the existing dwelling, without harm to the street scene. Moreover, the proposed external materials are in-keeping with those of the appeal dwelling and the prevailing character of other dwellings along this stretch of the road.

Conditions

14. I have included a standard plans condition to ensure certainty over the consented development. I have also included a condition requiring the external materials to match those of the building, to ensure the development is coherent with the street scene in terms of external design.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework (2021), and all other relevant material considerations, the appeal should be allowed.

James Blackwell

INSPECTOR