
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2021

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 November 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/21/3277491

24 Main Road, Naphill HP14 4QB

- 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 Mrs Azra Mussarat against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref 21/05295/FUL, dated 2 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is the construction of rear conservatory.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. An interested party states that the submitted drawings do not represent the house as it has been built. While I have had regard to this concern, my assessment is based on all of the evidence before me including an inspection of the site and its surroundings. On that basis, I am satisfied that the details of the existing dwelling and the proposal as shown on the plans and detailed in the written evidence allow a reasonable assessment of the appeal scheme.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area, including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a detached 2-storey house in a residential cul-de-sac of detached properties, which vary in scale, design and general appearance. It also lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB is a nationally designated area with the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
5. The Council has recently granted planning permission to enlarge No 24 with part single storey, part 2-storey side extensions, a front infill garage extension and a loft conversion served by 7 roof lights. At the time of the site visit, construction of this approved scheme was well underway with the main works substantially complete.

6. The proposal is to introduce a single storey extension that would project outwards from the back wall of the host building. In itself, the new addition would be modest in depth with a roof level set well below that of the host building. The materials to be used would match the existing dwelling and a good-sized back garden would remain with the new built form in place.
7. Even so, the proposal would be a sizeable addition. It would be considerable in width and, by attaching to an existing rear extension the appeal scheme would significantly elongate the built form of the original building. According to the Council, the combined length of the existing and new rear extensions would broadly match that of the original house, which is not contested. The proposal would also enlarge the footprint of the existing dwelling and noticeably add to its scale and mass. With an expanse of glazing including full-length windows in the new rear elevation and a large lantern roof light, the new development would also introduce a visually strong feature to the rear facade. Taken together, I consider that the proposal would appear as an overly large, bulky and highly conspicuous addition to the appeal property that would detract from its character and appearance.
8. The proposal would also introduce a substantial new built form into garden space that, at present, adds to the spacious feel at the rear of No 24. With its largely open grassed area sloping down to open fields beyond the site's rear boundary, this garden makes a positive contribution to the local area. It does so primarily by providing a visual break between existing development and the open countryside. While the back garden of No 24 is not visible in the local street scene, it nonetheless encompasses the characteristics of the local area as it is experienced and appreciated especially from nearby gardens. In views from these locations, the new built form would appear as a visually disruptive intrusion into largely open garden space. As such, it would be an unwelcome addition to the local area and detract from the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.
9. I saw that 26 Main Road has a sizeable rear conservatory, which is a prominent feature at the rear of this adjacent property. Unlike the proposal before me, this existing conservatory has a lightweight appearance with its glass panels in the sides, rear and roof. It is also smaller than the proposal. Taken together, these features would ensure that the presence of the existing conservatory would be less imposing than that of the appeal scheme. Although the appellant considers that the built area of the adjacent property on the opposite side of the site, 22 Main Road, is greater than that of the appeal dwelling, it is different in form to No 24 and so it is not directly comparable. As such, I attach only limited weight to these considerations in support of the appeal.

Living conditions

10. The sides of the proposed extension would be set in from the side boundaries of the site such that views from the rear facing windows of Nos 22 and 26 would not be significantly affected. The outlook from the rear windows of these neighbouring dwellings with an open aspect across their back gardens towards the fields beyond would remain. I also note the appellant's view that the proposal would not breach lines drawn at 45 or 60-degrees from the nearest habitable room window of either of these adjacent properties.
11. The upper part of the new extension would, however, be evident from the outdoor space at the back of the adjacent dwellings and from a side window of

the conservatory of No 26. That the new development would project well beyond the existing rear build line of the host building and occupy an elevated position relative to these gardens due to the sloping ground would accentuate its visual impact. In each of these views, the proposal would draw the eye as an overly large box-like addition that in my view would dominate outlook even against the backdrop of a taller and more substantive host building.

Conclusion on the main issues

12. On the main issues, I conclude that the proposed development would have an unacceptable effect on the existing property and the local area. It would not conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. It would also materially harm the outlook from the properties on either side of the site.
13. Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with Policies CP9, DM35 and DM36 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (LP) and the guidance within the Council's Householder Planning and Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. These policies and guidance broadly require high quality design, attractive buildings, and extensions that respect the character and appearance of the existing property and the area. It would also conflict with LP Policy DM30, which seeks to deliver the highest quality of design within the AONB, and to conserve or enhance its scenic beauty. 

Other matters

14. The proposal would make efficient use of the land available within the site, which the appellant considers to be previously developed. Once complete, the new extension would provide additional accommodation that would enhance the living conditions of future occupiers. Nevertheless, these benefits attract only moderate weight. They do not outweigh the identified harm and the great weight that the National Planning Policy Framework states should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs.
15. Interested parties raise several additional objections including its potential effect on privacy, light and wildlife and whether it would constitute overdevelopment of the site. These are all important matters and I have taken into account all of the submitted evidence. However, given my findings on the main issues, these are not matters that have been critical to my decision.

Conclusion

16. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
17. For the reasons set out above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR