
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/X0415/D/21/3280565

Tanglewood, 4 The Glebe, Prestwood HP16 9DN

- 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 Dean Stockwell against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref PL/21/1816/FA, dated 29 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 2-storey side extension, including demolition of existing single storey garage.
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Procedural matter

1. While the appellant has described the proposed development as in the above heading, the Council has additionally referred to a new front porch and changes to the rear doors of the dwelling. From my inspection of the plans, I consider that the Council's description more fully reflects the development sought. I have assessed the proposal on that basis.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the erection of a 2-storey side extension, including demolition of existing single storey garage.
3. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a front porch at Tanglewood, 4 The Glebe, Prestwood HP16 9DN in accordance with the terms of the application Ref PL/21/1816/FA, dated 29 April 2021, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Main issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development firstly, on the character and appearance of the local area; and secondly, on the living conditions of the occupiers of 6 The Glebe with particular regard to visual impact, light and sense of enclosure.

Reasons

5. The Council raises no objection to the proposed front porch. I, too, find this element of the appeal scheme acceptable because it would be modest in scale, height and depth, and appropriate in design and general appearance. It would respect the visual character of the host building and the surrounding area with no significant effect on the living conditions of others.

6. Therefore, I shall focus on the new 2-storey side extension. This part of the new development would follow the demolition and removal of the existing single storey garage at one side of the main house.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal property is a 2-storey detached house within a predominantly residential area, wherein buildings vary in style, type, height, scale and general appearance. Along The Glebe, I saw that adjacent buildings were generally separated by irregular sized gaps. These gaps, together with the contrasting built form, play an important role in differentiating one dwelling and its plot from another and in creating a sense of space within the street scene and the local area to which No 4 belongs.
8. The Council states that the site falls within a designated Residential Area of Special Character and in 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.
9. The proposed side extension has been designed to reflect the host building in terms of style, size and appearance with broadly matching external materials, rooflines and fenestration. It would, however, result in a much larger building with extended 2-storey front and rear elevations and a new sidewall close to the site's side boundary beyond which is the adjacent property, 6 The Glebe.
10. The existing single storey garage at the side of No 4 establishes a substantial built form at ground floor level close to the shared boundary with No 6. The new side addition would reduce the gap above ground floor level between these neighbouring properties by introducing additional built form. In doing so, a modest gap would be left between the 2-storey sidewalls of these neighbouring properties that would appear uncharacteristically narrow in a street scene where adjacent dwellings appear to be, for the most part, spaced further apart. With limited space between these adjacent dwellings, the finished building would appear cramped in its layout and in the relationship to No 6. This arrangement would be obtrusive in the street scene and detrimental to the character and appearance of the local area.
11. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Residential Extensions and Householder Development* (SPD) advises that 2-storey side extensions should have regard to the spaces between buildings in order to respect the pattern of existing development and to ensure that they blend into the street scene. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also notes that new development should add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character. For the reasons given, the proposal would not adhere to these important principles and policies.
12. As the site falls within a predominantly built up area, I share the Council's opinion that the proposal would conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns AONB. Nevertheless, I conclude on the first main issue, that the proposed side extension would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it is contrary to Policies GC1, H13, H15 and H16 of the Chiltern District Local Plan and Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District. These policies aim to ensure that new development

achieves a high standard of design; is not obtrusive; and does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the street scene or the locality.

Living conditions

13. In the side elevation of No 6 there is a ground floor living room window, from which views of the new 2-storey sidewall would be direct and at close range. There is a front window that I understand also serves this living room and so the side window that looks out onto No 4 is a second opening. Even so, the ground floor window facing the site still provides an important outlook from and allows natural light to reach a main habitable room.
14. Due to its scale, height and position close to the common boundary with between No 6 and the site, the proposal would visually dominate the outlook from the ground floor side window of No 6. In these views, the new extension would be taller and appear more substantial than the garage to be replaced.
15. There would also be some loss of natural light to the side of No 6 later in the day due to the overshadowing effect of the appeal dwelling with the new built form in place. The additional overshadowing would be modest given the presence of the existing boundary vegetation and garage of No 4. Even so, the loss of light would still accentuate the overly imposing presence of the new sidewall, causing it to overbear on the occupiers of No 6, especially when seen from their ground floor side window. In addition, the new flank wall would further enclose the space within the narrow corridor along the side of No 6. This arrangement would unduly heighten a sense of enclosure for the occupiers of No 6, which would be unneighbourly.
16. In reaching these conclusions, I accept that the existing vegetation that marks the boundary between Nos 4 and 6 would filter views of the proposal when seen from the ground floor side window, to some extent. However, soft landscaping cannot be relied on as an effective screen to new development because it can be cut back or removed at any time.
17. On the second main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed side extension would materially harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 6. Accordingly, it conflicts with LP Policies GC2, GC3, H13 and H14 and the Council's SPD insofar as they aim to safeguard residential amenity.

Other matters

18. The appellant states that planning permission was granted for a 2-storey extension to one side of No 6 that also included a front and rear extension. However, few details of this approved scheme have been provided and so I cannot be certain that the circumstances are the same or very similar to those before me. In any event, I have assessed the proposal on its own merits and find it to be unacceptable for the reasons given.
19. As the proposed front porch would be compatible with the character and appearance of the local area with no significant effect on the living conditions of others, it would comply with the planning policies and guidance cited by the Council. From my inspection of the plans, this element of the appeal scheme is clearly severable to the proposed side extension and so I am able to issue a split decision that grants planning permission solely for it.

20. No objection is similarly raised to the new rear doors. However, these doors would serve a kitchen diner that would be partly within the proposed side extension, which is objectionable. On that basis, the new doors cannot be regarded as clearly separate to the proposed side addition and so I am unable to grant planning permission for them as well.

Conditions

21. In addition to the standard time limit condition, it is necessary to impose a condition that requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for certainty. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the porch, a condition is imposed to require that the external materials match those of the existing building.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed in part and allowed in part.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) That part of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Refs 2021-10-PL-01 and 2021-10-PL-02.
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.