



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2022

by S Harley BSc(Hons) M.Phil MRTPI ARICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3630/D/21/3270792

15 Kingswood Close, Englefield Green, TW20 0NQ

- 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 Alexander Dobson against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref RU.20/1423, dated 9 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is double storey rear extension, double storey side extension, double storey front extension, new front bay windows, roof canopy above porch, single storey rear/side extension with balcony at rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have also dealt with another appeal Ref APP/Q3630/D/21/3284263 on this site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision.
3. In 2021 the Runnymede Design Supplementary Planning Document 2021 Appendix 4 Householder Guide (the SPD) was adopted. This is more up to date than the Runnymede Householder Guide 2003 cited on the decision notice but contains similar principles in respect of seeking good design that fits in with the street scene and host property and would not significantly harm the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the street scene; and the effect on the living conditions of occupiers of adjacent properties.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site is a detached house in a large garden in a built up residential area of mostly modern detached properties of varying design styles. Some of these have been extended. Residential extensions would be acceptable in principle provided all planning policies and material considerations would be satisfied.

6. At first floor the appeal proposal would retain about 1m gap to the side boundary with No 16 Kingswood Close. In this respect the proposal would meet the requirements of the SPD.
7. As the roof of the proposed two storey side extension would be at the same height as the main roof there would be some conflict with the SPD. However, at the front, the hipped roof with projecting gable would be of the same form as the existing and would be in keeping with the street scene. Moreover, the projecting gable would be re-positioned so that the front elevation would be symmetrical other than the narrow single storey flat roofed side extension. This would leave a gap of less than 0.5m to the shared boundary with No 16.
8. There are other examples of substantial properties nearby and the overall scale, mass and appearance of the proposal would not be out of character with the street scene. The appeal property is at a higher level than the properties across the street but, because of the setback from the roadside, it is not noticeably more prominent than other properties.
9. Various elevational materials including render are evident along Kingswood Close. Consequently the use of render for the external walls would not be inappropriate and would avoid any potential problem of matching proposed and existing materials. I see no reason to suppose that the proposal would fail to integrate in the mixed style street scene.
10. Despite there being some conflict with the SPD in respect of the lack of subordination with the host dwelling, on balance I consider the appearance of the extended dwelling from the front would not harm the host property or the street scene.
11. At the rear the proposed three hipped roof design would be somewhat convoluted. However, this would mean the two storey extension roofs would be lower than the ridge of the host property resulting in less bulk above the eaves.
12. Beyond the proposed two storey extension would be a single storey flat roofed extension some 3.3m high. There would be two large windows and two double doors at first floor level giving access to a balcony. This would have a glazed privacy screen some 1.4m higher than the parapet to either side and a screen some 900mm higher than the parapet at the rear. The screen would be set in from the side boundary shared with No 16. The flat roof would extend across the width of the property and across the proposed single storey side extension. There would be one long folding door at ground level.
13. The proposed single storey extension with the balcony due to the overall height, length extending beyond the side wall of the existing house and block like appearance would appear over dominant and disproportionate in relation to the host property. In addition the proposed doors/windows to the rear would be of disparate size and appearance and would align poorly with the balcony screen and the folding door below.
14. Whilst I conclude, on balance, that the proposed front and side extensions would not harm the host property or the street scene, I conclude that the rear extensions, whilst not intrusive in the street scene, would detract from the appearance of the host property at the rear and therefore would not amount to good design. Accordingly I conclude that the proposed rear extensions would conflict with those aims of Policy EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (the

LP) and the SPD that requires good design which respects the scale, mass and architectural style of the original building.

Living conditions

15. Number 16 Kingswood Close to the west, is a single storey bungalow that extends behind No 15. It has a number of windows in the east side elevation. Some of these are obscure glazed but the kitchen window is not. There are outbuildings within the curtilage of No 16 between the bungalow and the boundary with the appeal site and these already impinge on the outlook and light to the side windows of No 16.
16. I acknowledge that the proposed extensions would not protrude beyond the rear wall of No 16. However, in this case I consider the overall length and height of the proposed rear extensions so close to the shared boundary and projecting well above the outbuildings would have a dominant and overbearing effect on the outlook from the side windows and adjacent path at No 16 whether or not the kitchen counts as a habitable room. Accordingly the extensions would result in a gloomy and oppressive living conditions for occupiers of No 16.
17. The front elevation of the appeal house is positioned a little way behind the front wall of No 14 Kingswood Close. The latter is a two storey detached dwelling with rear conservatories. The combined length of the two storey and single storey rear extensions would be significantly greater than the guideline of 3m for a single storey extension in the SPD. The site plan demonstrates that the two storey rear extension would not breach the 45 degree splay line from the centre of the nearest rear window of No 14 and the single storey rear extension would not breach the 60 degree splay line. In these respects the proposals do not conflict with the SPD.
18. However, I note that the SPD states that the angles and dimensions cited are given to assist applicants but that individual cases will be considered on their own merits. The hipped forms of the main roof would reduce the mass of the roof above the first floor level but because of the height of the side balcony screen, which would be almost as high as the main eaves, I consider that due to the overall length and height of the proposed rear extensions so close to the shared boundary would have a dominant and overbearing effect on the outlook from the conservatories and garden of No 14. In my judgement the rear extensions would appear over bearing and would result in a gloomy and oppressive outlook for the occupiers of that property.
19. I acknowledge that the existing house and boundary treatment, including the beech hedge, cause some degree of overshadowing. However, the two storey part of the proposal and the combined height of the single storey extension and screen, would be significantly higher and more intrusive than the boundary treatment.
20. There would be a window at first floor on both side elevations. These would serve shower rooms and could be obscure glazed. Accordingly the extent of overlooking of adjacent properties would not be such as to warrant withholding permission on this ground. The glazed balcony screen would be sufficiently high to protect from direct over-looking. However, given the height of the balcony and the position relative to the boundaries, I consider there would be likely to

be a perception of over-looking that would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent properties, particularly those of No 14.

21. I conclude that the proposed rear extensions would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent properties. Accordingly the proposals would conflict with Policy EE1 of the LP; the SPD and those principles of the National Planning Policy Framework that seek to ensure no adverse effects on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

22. There is a protected oak tree some distance away at the bottom of the garden. Provided it was safe guarded during construction the proposals would not affect the tree.
23. The proposal would improve the dwelling, providing more space and a modern layout. However, there may be other less harmful ways in which this could be achieved so this matter does not lead me to any different conclusion in respect of the proposals before me.
24. The appellant has cited a number of other examples of houses nearby which have been granted permission for extensions. The resultant buildings form the street scene. I have found that the proposal is acceptable in the street scene which accords with the decisions on the cited examples. However, as far as I can see from the available evidence, none would have the same degree of harm to living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties or harm the host property in the way I have identified as arising from the appeal proposal. Accordingly I do not consider they set a precedent in this case.
25. Officers recommended that planning permission should be granted but the Planning Committee resolved that permission should be refused. I have exercised my own judgement on the planning merits of the proposals before me.

Conclusion

26. I conclude that the appearance of the proposed extensions would be acceptable. However, I have found that the development would be harmful to the living conditions of occupiers of adjacent properties and there would be conflict with the development plan in this respect. I have found no material considerations to outweigh this conflict. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Harley

INSPECTOR