



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/21/3284263

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 Mrs Sally Dobson against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref RU.21/1100, dated 25 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 September 2021.
 - The development proposed, as described on the application form, is double/single storey rear extension, first floor side extension above garage, replacement of front double storey section, new front bay windows and roof canopy above porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mrs Sally Dobson against Runnymede Borough Council. That application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The proposal is described slightly differently on the decision notice and the appeal form as the garage referred to in the original description has been demolished. Accordingly the Council determined the application as including a two storey side extension and I have considered the appeal in the same way.
4. I have also dealt with another appeal Ref APP/Q3630/D/21/3270792, relating to planning application Ref RU.20/1423 (the first application) on this site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision. A revised planning application Ref RU.21/0463 (the second application) was subsequently refused. The third application, Ref RU.21/1100, is the subject of this appeal.

Main Issues

5. 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

6. 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.

7. The appeal proposal would retain about 1m gap to both the side boundaries. In this respect the proposal would meet the requirements of the Runnymede Design Supplementary Planning Document 2021 Appendix 4 Householder Guide (the SPD).
8. 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.
9. There are other examples of substantial properties on Kingswood Close 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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. The Council raises no specific concerns about the appearance from the sides or rear and I see no reason to come to a different conclusion.
13. For the reasons set out above, on balance, I conclude that the proposed extensions would not harm the character and appearance of the host property or the street scene. Although there would be some conflict in respect of the SPD, overall there would be no conflict with those aims of Policy EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (the LP) which requires development to respond to the local context.

Living conditions

14. 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 and door are 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.
15. 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 gloomy and oppressive living conditions for occupiers of No 16.

16. 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. Nevertheless, 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 and the Council raises no objections in respect of the impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 14.
17. 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 and the single storey part would have a glazed roof but, in this case, I consider that 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 overbearing and would result in a gloomy and oppressive outlook for the occupiers of that property.
18. 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 would be significantly higher and more intrusive than the boundary treatment.
19. No windows are shown on the side elevations and no balconies are proposed. Accordingly there would be no additional overlooking of neighbouring properties as a result of the rear extensions.
20. 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 the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

21. 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.
22. 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 achieved so this matter does not lead me to any different conclusion in respect of the proposals before me.

23. 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 as I have identified as arising from the appeal proposal. Accordingly I do not consider they set a precedent in this case.
24. The appellant makes reference to the Runnymede Householder Guide 2003. However, this was not referred to on the decision notice for this appeal proposal as that decision was made after the adoption of the SPD.
25. Officers recommended that planning permission should be granted for the first application but the Planning Committee resolved that permission should be refused. I acknowledge that the proposals have subsequently been amended twice to try to overcome the objections raised. However, I have exercised my own judgement on the planning merits of the proposals before me, and the fact of amendments does not in itself lead me to any different conclusions.
26. The appellant has expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which the Council handled the planning application. However, this does not go to the heart of the planning merits of the proposals.

Conclusion

27. 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