The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2022 by Elizabeth Davies BSc (Hons) MIEMA, CEnv

Decision by Zoe Raygen DipURP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/21/3283723
Wonham Copse, Wonham Way, Peaslake GU5 9PA

- 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 Jenkins against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
- The application Ref 21/P/01522, dated 9 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 September 2021.
- The development proposed is partial ground floor demolition to the north one-storey block, side extension to the first floor, loft conversion, with new dormers to front and back elevations, change of fenestration to have triple glazing, new photovoltaic panels to the south roof face.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for partial ground floor demolition to the north one-storey block, side extension to the first floor, loft conversion, with new dormers to front and back elevations, change of fenestration to have triple glazing, new photovoltaic panels to the south roof face at Wonham Copse, Wonham Way, Peaslake GU5 9PA in accordance with the application, Ref 21/P/01522, dated 9 July 2021, subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

    2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development herby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

    3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: GMA0021-A-001, GMA0021-A-100, GMA0021-A-101, GMA0021-A-200, GMA0021-A-201, GMA0021-A-400, GMA0021-A-401, GMA0021-A-402, GMA0021-A-403 and GMA0021-A-404.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in the appeal are:

- Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and the development plan; and
- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether it would be inappropriate development

4. The appeal property is a detached, two storey dwelling. The dwelling is set within a spacious plot, accessed via a long, straight driveway. It is within an area of detached dwellings also sited on large plots, although the appeal property is set much further back from Wonham Way compared to the neighbouring properties.

5. Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall within the given list of exceptions. Policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: strategy and sites 2015-2034 (Adopted 25th April 2019) (the 'Local Plan') echoes this statement and defers to the Framework with regard to exceptions. One exception in the Framework is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

6. The term 'disproportionate additions' is not defined in the Framework and is a matter for the decision maker to determine whether the extension is disproportionate.

7. My attention has been directed to a number of appeal decisions to alterations and extensions of dwellings within the Green Belt. In the appeal cases, the Inspectors considered both the context and appearance of the properties as well as the uplift in floorspace when considering proportionality. Whilst I don't have full details of these cases or their circumstances, this is a reasonable approach to considering proportionality which I have followed when considering this appeal.

8. The appellant has disputed the Council's calculations as to the original, existing and proposed floorspace of the dwelling. The appellant has suggested the original floor area of the building was 265m^2 the existing is 394m^2 and the proposed is 363m^2 which equates to an increase of around 37% (or 45.7% if excluding the original garage). The Council have corresponding figures of 173m^2 original, 261m^2 existing and 302.92m^2 proposed. These figures equate to an increase of 75%.

9. The Council has included the porch, excluded the existing loft space and original garage from their figures. Whilst I agree with the appellant that it is reasonable that the figures include the original garage and exclude the porch, I do not agree that the loft space should be included as it isn't currently useable floorspace. Whilst I do not have all the information necessary to provide an exact calculation, an accurate representation of the proposed increase would fall somewhere between the Council's and the appellant's figures. In any case whilst this calculation provides an indication of proportionality, it cannot be solely relied upon to assess the proportionality of the proposed development.

10. Although the scale and floorspace of the dwelling will increase with the addition of a first floor side extension and loft conversion, the proposed demolition of the one-storey section of the existing dwelling will result in an overall reduction in the building's footprint. The first floor addition will match the roof height of the existing dwelling and the proposed front and rear dormers would not overly dominate the roof. Although there will be an increase in overall bulk from the proposal, the first floor addition would give the dwelling a more balanced appearance. I therefore do not consider that the proposed extensions would represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

11. For these reasons, I find that the proposal would not comprise inappropriate development within the Green Belt as defined by the Framework and Policy P2 of the Local Plan.

Character and Appearance

12. The Council consider that the scale and design of the first floor extension, the rear dormers and other proposed alterations are in keeping with the dwelling and I have no reason to consider otherwise. Whilst the proposed front dormer is large and would add additional bulk and mass to the property at roof level, the submitted plans show that the dormer would be positioned at a lower level than the existing roofline and the overall scale in relation to the extended roof means it would be subordinate in size to the property and its plot. It would not overly dominate or unbalance the appearance of the dwelling.

13. The appeal site is within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). An objection to the proposal was received from the Surrey Hills AONB Planning Adviser which references the visually greater impact that will occur as a result of the proposals. However, with the exception of views along the driveway, the appeal property is well concealed from the public and neighbouring properties by trees and hedges and the alterations are considered to be proportionate to the host dwelling. On this basis, I find the effect of the proposals on the AONB and AGLV would be neutral.

14. On this basis I do not consider the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the appeal property or the area and it would accord with Local Plan Policy D1 which seeks, amongst other things to ensure development achieves high quality design. It would also accord with saved Policy H8 and Policy G5 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (Adopted January 2003) which seek, amongst other things, to ensure new development protects the character and appearance of buildings and the surrounding environment. It would also accord with the Framework in so far as it requires that development should add to the overall quality of an area and should be sympathetic to local character

15. The Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2018 seeks to ensure roof extensions are carried out sympathetically. The SPD provides guidance on the design of dormer windows, which the proposal broadly conforms with.

Conditions

16. I have imposed the standard conditions relating to the commencement of development and specifying the relevant plans in order to provide certainty. I have included a condition requiring the external materials to match the existing building to protect the character and appearance of the appeal property.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

Elizabeth Davies

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR