



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2022

by Rebecca Thomas MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/21/3289221

10 Graffham Close, Earley, RG6 4DJ

- 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 Junaid Iqbal against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 212655, dated 3 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is Demolition of the existing garage and erection of two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Demolition of the existing garage and erection of two storey side extension at 10 Graffham Close, Earley, RG6 4DJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 212655, dated 3 August 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 212655 - Block Plan; 212655 - Existing Floor plan and Elevations; 212655 - Location Plan; 212655 - Proposed Floor plan and Elevations

Main Issues

2. I consider the main issues in this appeal to be:
 - i. impact of the development on the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area and;
 - ii. the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of the occupiers of no 2 Selsey Way with particular regard to daylight and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is a detached dwelling located within a quiet residential street, being a two storey brick built dwelling with a concrete tiled roof. The appeal site includes an attached garage to the side, and it is this which would be demolished to make way for a two storey addition to the dwelling. There is an existing parking area with a small area of lawn to the front of the dwelling.

The dwelling is located close to the front of its plot, which has an irregular shape due to the nature of the cul-de-sac arrangement of dwellings in the immediate locality. The neighbouring properties are a mixture of dwellings, with properties being two storey, as well as single storey, and of varying widths and orientations.

4. The proposed development would introduce a two storey element to the side of the existing dwelling. This would extend across the full depth of the existing house at ground floor, with the first floor being set back from the front elevation. This would provide a further bedroom and bathroom to the first floor, with a workshop to the ground floor. The materials are proposed to match the existing, with windows and doors to match.
5. The boundary with the rear of the properties on Selsey Way consists of a close boarded fence which runs along the side of the appeal site, to meet the wall with the existing garage. As set out in the plans and noted at my site visit, I was able to see that the garage wall forms part of the boundary with neighbouring properties. The development would retain this existing boundary.
6. Whilst it is set out in the Council's Design Guide SPD¹ that there should be gap between a building and the site boundary, the existing arrangement does not allow for this, with the appeal site boundary including, in part, the existing garage wall as described above. The proposed development would not alter this boundary arrangement, although the extent of the built form would increase as a result of the two storey element. I therefore find that this aspect of the proposal would not cause harm to the layout or appearance of the plot or the local area. In addition to this, given the set back of the development at first floor, and the set down from the ridge of the existing roof, the proposed development would not appear unduly dominant to the existing dwelling, and in the context of nearby two storey dwellings with triple frontages, would not appear out of keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.
7. Whilst the Council raises concern about the loss of the lawned area to the front of the dwelling to provide additional hardstanding for parking, the appellant has confirmed that some soft landscaping would be retained. Nonetheless, given the residential nature of the area, including the requirement for parking to the front of dwellings and the varying treatments to front garden areas, I do not consider that any changes to the existing arrangements to the front lawn and parking areas would be significantly detrimental to the character and appearance of the locality.
8. The Council has also found that the addition of a door to the workshop at ground floor would result in a prominent and contrived appearance, resulting in an appearance of a separate dwelling squeezed on to the end of the house. The appellant has explained that the door is required to provide access through to the rear of the house via the workshop rather than through the living areas. Whilst I accept that an additional door here may be unusual, and given my previous findings, consider that the impact to the overall character and appearance would not be unduly affected as result of the additional door. In addition to this, I am mindful that the plans forming part of the appeal do not suggest that the development would be separated from the existing.

¹ Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide (May 2012)

9. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the proposed development would not result in a cramped and contrived appearance and thus would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, I find no conflict with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy² which expect, (amongst other things) development to be of an appropriate scale, layout, built form and height to the character of the area. The development would also accord with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), relating to achieving well designed places.

Living conditions

10. The Council raises concern due to the positioning of the two storey extension hard against the side boundary. Notwithstanding the conflict with the guidance in the Design Guide SPD, as previously explained, this boundary appears to be the 'as built' boundary and as such the existing arrangements for the garage wall to form part of the boundary would not be inherently altered.
11. No. 2 Selsey Way is located southwest of the appeal site, at an angle from the site, with the corner of that dwelling being the closest point to the appeal site. I saw on my site visit that no. 2 has a number of mature evergreen trees along its boundary to the appeal site. I was also able to see that close to the shared boundary with the appeal site has a small sheltered area for the garden, sitting parallel with the appeal site. No. 2 has a number of rear doors on to the garden, with the closest door appearing to serve a single storey utility/garage area. I was able to see that there were patio doors and sitting out area located further from the appeal site.
12. The Council confirms that the Design Guide SPD requires a back to flank separation distance of 12 metres to the neighbouring property and says that this is achieved through the existing arrangement. However, this would be breached as a result of the appeal development, bringing the building 9.4m from the rear of the neighbouring property at no. 2 Selsey Way.
13. Whilst I accept that the proposed development would increase the extent of the built form along the depth of the existing house, the buildings do not have a direct back to flank relationship, being orientated at an angle to each other and as such there is not a direct overlooking relationship between the two dwellings. As described above, there is an existing hard wall along the boundary with no. 2 as a result of the garage. As such, I find that the proposal may only marginally breach the separation distance requirements of the SPD. Whilst I accept that the proposal would introduce a taller gable end as a result of the two storey development, given the angles and arrangements between the appeal site and no. 2, I do not find that the development would result in any unacceptable overbearing or dominant feature and would not have a significant enclosing effect on the outlook from no.2. Therefore, I find that the proposal would comply with the requirements of the Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 and the Design Guide SPD, which require good design which does not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Other Matters

14. The Council raises concern as a result of the loss of the lawned area for parking and the impact to the character and appearance of the area is assessed above.

² Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (January 2010)

I note that the Council's Highways Officer has raised no concern as a result of the proposed parking arrangements subject to two spaces being retained. The appeal documents show parking for two cars and I have no reason to dispute that this would not be possible.

15. The concerns relating to construction methods and party wall issues are private interests and not considerations I have given any weight to.

Conditions

16. In addition to the standard timescale for implementation condition, it is necessary to attach a condition to confirm the approved drawings in the interests of certainty, and this also includes the details relating to the materials to be employed in the construction.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the local area nor harm the living conditions of occupiers at no. 2 Selsey Way and would accord with the development plan and the Framework. Therefore, the appeal is allowed.

Rebecca Thomas

INSPECTOR