

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2022 by A Coombes

Decision by K Taylor BSC (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/22/3291240

Coopers Wood, Bowstridge Lane, Chalfont St Giles HP8 4RF

- 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 Ian Fancy against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - South Area (South Bucks).
 - The application Ref PL/21/3333/FA, dated 19 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is Two storey side extension to replace existing ground floor extension, with additional single storey to the rear. Two storey rear extension to kitchen, two storey rear extension off living room, new front porch extension with associated internal refurbishment and alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

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 are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area; and
 - the living conditions of the neighbouring occupants at Hillcrest.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. Coopers Wood is a detached property, constructed in brick, situated within the Green Belt. The dwelling is characterised by a centrally pitched roof and pitched roof dormers. There is a single storey garage forming the southern flank. The surrounding area is predominantly residential and somewhat rural. The proposal seeks permission for a two-storey side and rear extension and front porch extension.

Character and Appearance

5. The proposed side and rear extension would engulf the flank of the property and significantly increase the bulk of the building. This would be clearly visible from the public realm and neighbouring properties. However, the lower ridge height would show subservience when viewed from the front of the property and in terms of materials the development would integrate well with the existing dwelling.

6. The incorporation of the crown roof, however, would significantly alter the architectural character of the existing dwelling, which currently has a centrally pitched roof and pitched dormers. Due to its height and bulk, the crown roof element would be visible from the street scene and neighbouring properties. By failing to respect and integrate with the existing roof form of the appeal property, the proposed development would appear incongruous and visually intrusive.
7. It is acknowledged that the area varies in character and the appellant has provided examples of nearby developments, some of which have incorporated a crown roof, but this does not sufficiently mitigate the harm that has been identified. The examples provided appear to be modern properties that are situated on Dibden Hill and are materially different in design to the appeal site. Primarily the harm would amount to Coopers Wood itself, nonetheless this would result in some wider harm to the immediate character of the area.
8. For the reasons given above, the development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area. Therefore, it would not comply with Policies GC1, H13, H15, H18 of the Chiltern District Local Plan, adopted 1997¹ (LP) and Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, adopted 2011. Together these Policies seek to resist development that is not of a high-quality design and does not relate well to its surroundings, with Policies H13 and H15 regarding extensions and H18 dormer windows. Furthermore, the development would not comply with the Residential Extensions and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted 2013, which requires extensions to harmonise with their host buildings and to integrate in such a way that does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the locality.

Living Conditions

9. The appeal site occupies a higher ground level than the neighbouring Hillcrest, which also sits slightly forward of the building line. Due to the existing relationship, Coopers Wood is highly visible from a first floor habitable window in the neighbouring property and the outlook from Hillcrest is already impacted due to the boundary treatment, which sits comparatively higher. Whilst the proposed development would add bulk at first-floor level, it would not significantly alter the outlook from habitable rooms on the side and rear elevations of Hillcrest, given that the appeal site is offset from the boundary. Outlook from the garden of Hillcrest would be altered, due to the proposed rearwards projection of the northern flank. However, the garden is sufficiently sized that a large portion of it would remain unaffected and the change in outlook would not be so materially different that it would cause undue harm.
10. The proposed development would extend the dwelling rearwards along the boundary and add bulk at first-floor level. However, the extension would be modest in size and would not be so substantial that it would lead to a harmful sense of enclosure. Furthermore, a sufficient distance from the boundary would be maintained to ensure that the addition would not be overbearing and would not be detrimental to the living conditions of the occupants of Hillcrest. Any additional loss of light, due to the orientation of the properties and the proposed extensions, would be minimal given that both properties are offset from the boundary.

¹ Including the alterations adopted 29 May 2001. Consolidated September 2007 & November 2011.

11. For the reasons given above, the development would not be harmful to the living conditions of the neighbouring occupants at Hillcrest, with particular regard to outlook, overbearing and loss of light. Therefore, it would comply with Policies GC2, GC3, H13 and H14 (LP). Together these Policies seek to resist development that is detrimental to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, with Policy GC2 specifically relating to loss of light. Furthermore, the development would comply with the SPD, which requires that development does not have a significant adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.

Other Matters

12. Between Policies GB12 and GB4 the Council will permit extensions to dwellings situated within specific policy areas within the Green Belt. However, these Policies do not require a consideration of whether the development is disproportionate and are therefore not consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework).
13. The evidence indicates that the dwelling has not been previously extended. The proposed extensions would be located largely to the side and rear of the dwelling and whilst overall they would not amount to small additions they nevertheless would relate well to the main dwelling and would appear subservient and therefore would not appear disproportionate. Given this, the proposal would be consistent with Green Belt policy and, by definition, would not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. However, this does not mitigate the harm found above in respect of the character and appearance of the dwelling and area.
14. The appellant has highlighted that the Council did not seek to address any concerns during the application stage. However, this appeal has been considered on its main planning merits and this matter does not carry any weight in the determination of the appeal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. Although no harm has been found in respect of the impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, this is a neutral matter which cannot outweigh or mitigate the harm that would arise to the character and appearance of the house and area. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Coombes

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

K Taylor

INSPECTOR