



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2022

by Rebecca Thomas MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/22/3294166

Fairlea, Garde Road, Sonning, Reading RG4 6XJ

- 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 C Reimers against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 220026, dated 5 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is Householder application for the proposed erection of overhanging roof to front, erection of single storey ground floor rear extension, raising of the roof to create additional first floor accommodation, with the addition of 1 no. balcony to front, plus the insertion of 5 no. rooflights, changes to fenestration & associated roof alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission is granted for Householder application for the proposed erection of overhanging roof to front, erection of single storey ground floor rear extension, raising of the roof to create additional first floor accommodation, with the addition of 1 no. balcony to front, plus the insertion of 5 no. rooflights, changes to fenestration & associated roof alterations at Fairlea, Garde Road, Sonning, Reading RG4 6XJ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 220026, dated 5 January 2022, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan (1:1250); Block Plan (1:500); Proposals Plan RGR/21/1.
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown on the application documents.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed from that stated on the planning form. Notwithstanding this, I have used the description as used on the Council's decision notice as this more accurately describes the proposal as shown on the plans and I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located on a quiet lane which faces open fields beyond. The main characteristic of the area is one of a quiet residential area on the edge of the settlement, which looks out on to the open countryside, edged with a grass verge and mature trees. Dwellings tend to be set well back from the street, with front gardens and off-street parking available. Travelling along Garde Road, dwellings vary in appearance, age and construction, due to different alterations however the overall effect is one of a quiet and spacious edge-of-settlement lane which benefits from a green edge.
5. I was able to see at my site visit that dwellings have been altered which results in the variety through the local area, including gable features, hipped roofs, porch additions, dormer windows, red brick and tiled roofs. The appeal site is a detached one and a half storey dwelling with a plain tile roof and white painted render walls and brick walls to the front. The house appears to have previously been altered, providing a two storey element to one side, featuring dormer windows to the front, with a further gable and dormer alterations to the rear.
6. The proposed development would introduce a triple gable feature to the front and rear elevations. The rear elevation would not be easily seen from the street or nearby areas and as such I find that this would not affect the character and appearance of the street. The front elevation would also feature a hipped gable to the centre, with a balcony feature. Whilst I accept that the existing dwelling features few gables to its front elevation at present, I was able to see similar such features throughout the local area, including Garde Road, Hawthorne Way and Glebe Lane. The introduction of the extensions would rationalise the existing roofline, which is currently rather disjointed, featuring the dormer windows and two storeys alongside a single storey element across the frontage.
7. With the exception of a modest rear single storey extension, the proposals make use of the existing footprint of the dwelling within its plot and as such would not alter the extent of dwelling as seen across the width. In the context of neighbouring properties, the appeal site is orientated on the perpendicular, with the relationship being side to rear, with those properties being corner plots to Hawthorne Way and Glebe Lane. I was able to see that the majority of properties on Hawthorne Way feature gabled frontages, and the property at Glebe Lane featuring a hipped gable roof. Taking into account the orientation of these properties to each other, as well as the features that I have already identified, I find that the proposed development would harmonise with the existing dwellings nearby, and thus would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the local area.
8. Whilst I accept that the development would be facilitated through provision of a crown roof arrangement, the resultant development as seen from the street would primarily be that of the triple gable feature. In addition, I also accept that the roof of the original dwelling would be raised, however it would have the effect of rationalising the existing roof arrangement which is somewhat

random. Whilst the Design Guide SPD¹ states that roofs should not be raised unless nearby buildings are significantly taller, the distance and the orientation of the building alongside the neighbouring properties, as described above, would not inherently cause significant harm to the overall character and appearance of the area.

9. The Council raises concern with regard to the harm to the open landscape of the adjacent countryside. Whilst I have identified that the appeal site is located in a pleasant 'edge-of-settlement' area, which abuts the open countryside beyond, the proposed development would remain within the defined residential area. Whilst the development would be visible from the countryside beyond, the appeal site would remain in context of a residential street and within its plot and I have concluded that the development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the local area, and as such would not cause harm to the open nature of the countryside.
10. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the proposed development would not result in a complicated, incongruous and excessive development within the street scene and would relate well to neighbouring properties in the surrounding area. Thus I find the development would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area nor the open countryside beyond. Accordingly I find no conflict with Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 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. Neither do I find any conflict with Policy CC01 of the Local Plan³ which also seeks a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The development would also accord with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, relating to achieving well designed places.

Conditions

11. 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

12. 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. Therefore the appeal is allowed.

Rebecca Thomas

INSPECTOR

¹ Wokingham Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (June 2012)

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

³ Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (February 2014)