

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2022

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/22/3292523

2 Greenways, Sandhurst GU47 8PJ

- 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 Colin Wright against the decision of Bracknell Forest Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00314/FUL, dated 24 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is a first floor over an existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effects of the proposal on:
 - i) The character and appearance of the local area, including potential effects on existing trees; and
 - ii) Living conditions at neighbouring properties, in terms of privacy and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. 2 Greenways is a detached house on a corner plot on the edge of a residential area of similar houses and bungalows, described by the Bracknell Forest Character Area Assessments Supplementary Planning Document as a coherent, distinct and high quality housing estate, developed in the 1930s. Crowthorne Road, which runs alongside the site, is a through route lined by trees which give it a verdant character.
4. No 2 and No 1 opposite are built in a distinctive Dutch architectural style with mansard roofs at first floor level. The house sits near the top of a slope with a flat roofed garage building in the back garden, built in a cranked form and also sitting on high ground. The proposal is to build a first floor extension over part of the garage, with mansard roofs in a similar style to the house.
5. Due to the garage's elevated position and proximity to Crowthorne Road, the much taller extension would be a prominent feature in several different views,

including from Crowthorne Road, the junction with Greenways and the next street down the hill, Broom Acres. Although the roof style is attractive on the main house, its replication on top of part of a flat roofed outbuilding is not necessarily desirable. In this situation it would look like it was spliced onto the building, giving it an awkward and contrived appearance. It would be overly dominant in local views, challenging the visual importance of the house.

6. The proposed extension would also intrude into a group of mature oak and pine trees in No 2's back garden which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order due to the trees' importance to the street scene and the general character of Crowthorne Road. The proposed extension would not add any new footprint to the building other than for an external stair so would have little if any direct impact on the trees. Some of the oak branches overhang the outbuilding, however, and the development would very likely increase pressure to cut these back either now or in the future. I appreciate the appellant's clear wish not to harm these trees and note that other developments in the area have resulted in the loss of trees. Nevertheless, cutting back significant branches could add to the harm already identified above.
7. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the local area. It conflicts with the aims of Policy EN20 of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (LP), Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), to secure high quality design that is in sympathy with the appearance and character of the local environment including through the protection of trees.

Living conditions

8. The proposed extension would be located away from neighbouring properties but could still potentially have significant impacts due to its elevated position. Two of the proposed first floor windows would not face neighbours and the other one, facing toward 4 Broom Acres' garden, could potentially be obscure glazed to protect privacy. The proposed external stair, however, would provide elevated views over the gardens of 2 Broom Acres which could not effectively be mitigated without significant changes to the submitted plans.
9. The extension would not be large in scale and would be far enough away from nearby properties, so it would not unduly interfere with neighbours' outlook. I conclude, however, that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the privacy of neighbours at 2 Broom Acres due to overlooking from the external stair. It therefore also conflicts with the aims of LP policy EN20 and the Framework, to ensure that development does not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding properties.

Other matters

10. I have taken account of the other points raised. I note the appellant's comments about the Council's handling of the application and confirm that I have assessed this case on its planning merits only. The appellant states that some of the land enclosed within 4 Broom Acres' garden is owned by the Crown. I see that this land is marked differently on the submitted Ordnance Survey location plan, but have not been given any definitive evidence of ownership. This matter would not significantly affect my decision in any case.

Finally, I acknowledge the appellant's need for home office space, but do not see that this proposal is the only potential way to provide that space. I find nothing to override my findings in regard to the main issues.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR