

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2021

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 DECEMBER 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/21/3276925

Wychwood, Church Road, Windlesham GU20 6BT

- 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 Ravenscroft against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0882/FFU, dated 28 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is a side and rear partial single and two storey extension, a rear balcony with privacy screens, a flat rooflight on the single storey, 4 rooflights in the pitched roof, a lean to porch over a relocated new entrance and a garage door.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. A new version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published on 20 July 2021, after the date the appeal was submitted. The revised Framework does not significantly alter my assessments in this appeal. I am satisfied that no parties have been prejudiced by my having regard to this change in national policy.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposal on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the house and the local area; and
 - ii) living conditions at the neighbouring property Christmas Cottage in terms of overshadowing or loss of natural light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Wychwood is a small semi-detached house sitting within a residential area characterised by a mix of house types and styles. The proposal is to knock down a detached single garage at the side of the house and build a 2 storey side/rear extension, plus other minor changes including a single storey flat roof section at the back of the existing house.

5. The Council's *Residential Design Guide* Supplementary Planning Document (RDG) advises that side and rear extensions should be subservient to the main building and maintain its design. The proposal would follow the design guidance of the RDG in some respects. The extension would be set back at the front and set down in height. Although it would be wider in plan than the existing house, this would not appear disproportionate as seen at the front. The extension would be set in from the boundary so that a gap would be maintained between Wychwood and The Orange House next door. I consider the proposed demolition of the existing garage to be a neutral factor here because this is a small, low building with little presence in the street scene.
6. The 2 storey extension would, however, be much deeper than the existing house, stretching well beyond the main rear wall. This would create a very long 2 storey high structure at the side which would be a prominent feature in the street scene, especially as seen from the nearby junction with Thorndown Lane. Due to this excessive depth, the extension would not be subservient to the main house in scale or visual impact. It would also be out of scale and proportion with the shallow 2 storey plan depth of The Orange House.
7. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the house and the local area. It would therefore conflict with the aims of Policy DM9 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2011-2028 (CS), Policies 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1 of the Windlesham Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2028 (WNP), the RDG and the Framework, to secure high quality design that respects local character.

Living conditions

8. The Council's concern here is about overshadowing of a rear first floor window at Christmas Cottage. The 2 storey section of the proposal would, however, be set away from that window which would continue to receive a good degree of sunlight and daylight over the top of the extension. It would also maintain its open, sunny outlook to the southwest.
9. I conclude that the proposal would not unduly affect living conditions at the neighbouring property Christmas Cottage due to overshadowing or loss of natural light. It therefore accords in this respect with the aims of CS Policy DM9, WNP Policy 2.2, the RDG and the Framework, to ensure that development respects the amenities of neighbours.

Other matters

10. I have considered all other matter raised. In particular, I recognise that the appellant reasonably wishes to improve the family home in part to provide improved home working space. These personal issues are not, however, sufficient justification for a permanent development in this case.

Conclusion

11. Although I find merit in some aspects of the proposed design and find no undue impact on neighbours' living conditions, my concerns in relation to the scale, depth and visual impact of the proposed 2 storey element are sufficiently compelling for me to conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR