



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2022 by Ms S Maur BA (Hons)

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/22/3301085

6 Brunel Drive, Woodley, Reading RG5 4PW

- 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 A Wilkes against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 220206, dated 24 January 2022 was refused by notice dated 28 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is a ground floor rear extension, ground floor front extension and loft conversion to raise the height of the roof to provide second floor bedroom accommodation.
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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 Issue

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the area; and
 - ii) the living conditions of the neighbouring property, number 8, with particular regard to whether the development would be overbearing.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a modest two-storey dwelling with an attached single storey garage which projects out minimally to the rear of the main dwelling. The site is set within a suburban estate with a residential character. There is an existing ground and first floor extension to the rear of the appeal dwelling. There is also a porch to the front of the property, with a sloping roof that sits just below the sill of the first-floor window with generally a greater mass and projection than other nearby porches. The dwelling shares a similar front building line with three other properties to the west which is set forward of the properties either side of them. These dwellings share similar characteristics such as gable roofs, fenestration and materials, which gives the street an established character. Both the host dwelling and No.10 have hipped roof elements to the rear. The two properties to the east have side extensions.

There are also examples of single storey rear extensions on this road, however I did not note any properties that had raised the ridge of the roof or had full width porch extensions.

5. The proposal consists of a number of elements. This includes a ground floor front extension that would extend the existing porch to the full width of the house and raising the roof to enable a loft conversion which would introduce a large flat roofed area with a half hip. In addition, a single storey rear extension which includes raising part of the existing flat roof of the garage and the installation of rooflights and Juliet balconies is proposed.
6. The existing porch and other porches present on this road are subservient to the host dwellings, covering a relatively small proportion of the front elevation. As the proposed porch would extend the existing porch to the full width of the property, it would appear as excessive in scale and would envelop the front of the property.
7. Although the host dwelling and No.10 both have pitched roof elements, the half hip and flat roofed segment to the rear would not be a sympathetic addition to the gabled roof of the host dwelling and it would appear out of keeping with the surrounding properties. In addition, increasing the ridge of the roof would add significant bulk to the property resulting in a dominant the roofscape when seen in the context of the neighbouring dwellings. This would be exacerbated by the forward position of the property and the gap between the host dwelling and No.4 which would make this element of the scheme very visible from Brunel Drive as well as from neighbouring gardens. There are established trees on this road, however these would not conceal the proposed roof extension.
8. There are examples of single storey rear extensions within the locality, however, the appeal property has already had a substantial two storey rear extension. The proposal would add significant mass when seen alongside the existing extension. While this part of the proposal would not be greatly visible from the public domain, it would add considerable bulk resulting in harm to the modest character of the existing dwelling.
9. There are a number of examples of rear extensions where the roof is visible above the garage from the street scene, including one with a roof lantern and in this context this element of the appeal scheme, in isolation, would not appear as out of character.
10. There are some differences between the host dwelling and the nearby properties No.2 and No.4 with regard to the scale, size, configuration of the dwellings and subsequent extensions. However, due to the positioning the host property has a closer relationship with the three neighbouring properties to the west, which have a level of uniformity. Therefore the alterations to some of the dwellings in the wider area would not result in the appeal scheme being acceptable.
11. Guideline R23 of the Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document adopted 2012 (SPD) states that alterations and extensions should contribute positively to both the original building and local character as well as relating well to the neighbouring properties. For the above reasons, the proposed scheme would therefore conflict with the overarching aims of this document.

12. For the reasons given above, the development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. It would not accord with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy adopted 2010 (Core Strategy) and Policy CC01 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan adopted 2014 (Local Plan) which seeks planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan and are of an appropriate scale, mass, built form, height, materials and character to the area with a high quality of design in order to maintain or enhance a high quality of the environment.

Living Conditions

13. The appeal property has a single storey garage which is attached to the neighbouring garage at No.8 and projects out minimally to the rear of the dwelling. Both properties have substantial rear gardens and there is a considerable sized hedge and tree along the shared boundary between them. The host dwelling has an existing two-storey rear extension. There is a staggered rear building line between No.4 and No.8. with the host dwelling projecting out further to the rear of No.8.
14. The proposal includes a single storey rear extension which would extend up to the boundary with No.8.
15. Taking into consideration that the garage at No.8 sufficiently offsets the main part of this dwelling from the boundary and the substantial sized garden. This would act as a buffer and would mitigate the proposal with respect of being overbearing. Therefore, the proposal would not cause harm to the living conditions of No.8. This would not conflict with the overarching aims of the SPD which seeks to avoid undue impacts on the living conditions of neighbours.
16. For the reasons outlined above, the development would not cause harm to the living conditions of No.8. It would accord with Policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and Policy CC01 of the Local Plan which seeks planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan, that maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, without a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users and their quality of life.

Other Matters

17. There would be benefits of having extra space in the property to accommodate a growing family. However, these would be private benefits, as such these only carry limited weight and would not outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. I have found that the development would not result in harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No.8. However, this would not minimise or outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area that would arise.
19. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ms S Maur

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

20. 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