



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2022

by J Reid BA(Hons) BArch(Hons) RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/W/22/3292130

6 Grattons Drive, Pound Hill, Crawley RH10 3AA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Grant against Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref CR/2021/0810/FUL, is dated 3 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is "Two storey rear extension, Single storey front garages to form enclosure, extension of side dormer".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for "Two storey rear extension, Single storey front garages to form enclosure, extension of side dormer" at 6 Grattons Drive, Pound Hill, Crawley RH10 3AA, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CR/2021/0810/FUL, dated 3 November 2021, 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 numbered: 375/01, 375/02, 375/03 (existing elevations and section), 375/03A (location and block plans), 375/04, 375/05, and 375/10B.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.
 - 4) Notwithstanding the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no windows/dormer windows other than those expressly authorised by this permission shall be constructed on the north and south (side) elevations of the development hereby permitted.

Preliminary matter and main issues

2. The Council's concerns relate mainly to the effects on the appeal dwelling and nearby dwellings, and the living conditions of the occupiers of 4 and 8 Grattons Drive. With this in mind, the main issues are the effect that the proposed development would have on:
 - the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and

- the living conditions of the occupiers of 4 and 8 Grattons Drive regarding outlook, and 8 Grattons Drive regarding sunlight and daylight, and privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is situated within a mainly residential area towards the south end of Grattons Drive, near its junctions with Milton Mount Avenue and Worth Park Avenue. The site is also within the Milton Mount Avenue Area of Special Local Character (ASLC) designated in the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 (LP), which is mostly characterised by detached dwellings in generous verdant plots that are set well back from its streets including the mostly tree-lined Milton Mount Avenue. The mature trees at the far end of the site and nearby contribute positively to the sense of place.
4. Roughly north and opposite, the mainly detached dwellings of similar forms and styles in moderate back gardens are set back from the road by front gardens and/or drives in a broadly linear pattern. At the site and further south, the nearby dwellings of more varied forms and styles are set back from the road to differing degrees in mostly larger plots. So, the main part of the roughly 1960s style appeal dwelling is sited deeper into its lengthy plot than the 2 storey dwelling at 8 Grattons Drive to roughly north, the dwelling at 4 Grattons Drive is closer to the road, and the dwelling beyond it to roughly south is sited much further back.
5. The appeal dwelling includes a single storey front range a little way from its side boundary with 8 Grattons Drive, which includes a garage and car port facing the street, the front of which broadly aligns with the front of the dwelling at 8 Grattons Drive. At the back, the dwelling includes a narrow single storey range fairly close to the side boundary with 8 Grattons Drive, and a similarly deep garden wall a little way from the side boundary with 4 Grattons Drive.
6. The main part of the appeal dwelling is shallower than most nearby dwellings. Its eaves are roughly at ground floor ceiling level, and its roof includes a low pitched roof slope facing 8 Grattons Drive, a steeper pitched roof facing 4 Grattons Drive, and asymmetrical gable ends facing the front and back of the site. Its upper floor is within the roof space, but the nearest parts of its rooms, including the modest side facing dormer, are sited well away from the side boundary with 8 Grattons Drive. So, the floor space in the upper floor is less than that of the ground floor in the main part of the dwelling.
7. The Council says that the existing house was carefully designed, possesses significant character, and makes a unique contribution to the area's character, and I agree. The Council has not raised concerns about the extension to the garage. Because it would be in keeping with the form and character of the appeal dwelling and it would be sited well back from Grattons Drive, I agree.
8. The back extension (the extension) would be as wide as the existing dwelling, but no deeper than its back range, and it would barely be seen from any nearby street. The extension, including its dormer, would reflect the form and features of the main part of the dwelling, so it would sustain the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. Whilst the depth of the main part of the dwelling would be increased, its depth would be little different to that of the dwelling at 8 Grattons Drive.

9. Because the extension with its compact upper floor rooms would be about as deep as the existing back range and garden wall, the spaciousness in the existing back garden and the important trees within it would be retained. As the increased mass of the extension would be readily assimilated into its verdant surroundings, the proposal would harmonise with the character and appearance of the ASLC when seen from the dwellings and their back gardens at 4 and 8 Grattons Drive, and in the glimpsed or distant views from the other surrounding dwellings and their grounds, including 22 Waterways in Grattons Drive, 43 Milton Mount Avenue and 1 Cobbett Close.
10. Therefore, I consider that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would satisfy LP Policies CH2 and CH3 which seek high quality design and respect for context, LP Policy CH14 which seeks respect for the existing character and appearance of the ASLC, the Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) which aims to achieve well-designed places.

Living conditions

11. Because the extension's low pitched roof would slope up gently by the side of the far end of the back garden at 8 Grattons Drive, it would be similarly acceptable to the pitched roofed outbuilding by 22 Waterways beyond its far end. So, it would not be harmfully overbearing or oppressive in the outlook from the back of the dwelling at 8 Grattons Drive or its back garden. Due to the scale of the back garden at 4 Grattons Drive, and the substantial distance between the extension and the back of the dwelling there, the proposal would have little impact on the outlook of those adjoining occupiers in their home and back garden. Due also to its scale, form and orientation, the extension would not unacceptably overshadow, or harmfully diminish the sunlight and daylight received in, the dwelling and its back garden at 8 Grattons Drive.
12. The nearest parts of the upper floor rooms in the extension would be well away from the common boundary with 8 Grattons Drive and by the far end of its back garden. Because the window cill in the dormer would be roughly 1.5 m above finished floor level in the bathroom, which is not a habitable room, the minimal overlooking that could occur would not harmfully diminish the privacy of the occupiers of 8 Grattons Drive in their home or back garden. The proposal would be contrary to parts of the SPD, including its 45° and 60° guidelines. However, having had regard to the site specific circumstances, and as the same is true of the appeal dwelling, that conflict would be acceptable.
13. Thus, I consider that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of 4 and 8 Grattons Drive regarding outlook, and 8 Grattons Drive regarding sunlight and daylight, and privacy. It would satisfy LP Policy CH3 which seeks a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, the aims of the SPD which include to avoid overshadowing and dominance, and the Framework which seeks a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Conditions

14. The Council's suggested conditions have been considered and reworded as necessary in the light of Framework paragraph 56 and Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the standard implementation condition, the condition identifying the approved plans is necessary for certainty. The condition to

control the external materials is reasonable and necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area. The condition withdrawing permitted development rights for windows and/or dormer windows in the side elevations of the development is necessary to protect the adjoining occupiers' privacy.

Conclusion

15. I have found that the proposed development would satisfy the Development Plan when taken as a whole. The other considerations in this case, including the Framework, do not indicate a determination otherwise.
16. For the reasons given, the appeal should be allowed.

J Reid

INSPECTOR