
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2023

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/22/3306349

4 Lombardy Drive, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 2LG

- 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 and Mrs Moffat against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02066/FHA, dated 29 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is single and part two storey front extension and alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of single and part two storey front extension and alterations at 4 Lombardy Drive, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 2LG, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 22/02066/FHA, dated 29 June 2022, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 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, wren naj 27 2022 and wren naj 27b 2022.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted, apart from the render and Cedar cladding as specified on the approved plans, shall match those of the existing building.
 - 4) The new first floor side facing ensuite bathroom window hereby approved shall be permanently fitted with obscured glazing (of at least Pilkington level 3) and non opening (unless the part of the window is above 1.7m above floor level) and thereafter maintained as such.

Main issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. 4 Lombardy Drive is a detached two storey house of a design typical of the 1960s. It lies within a wider residential area identified by the Council as Swing Gate, much of which is characterised by older, interwar houses. It is of a

simple form with the ridge parallel to the road and a projecting single width garage.

4. I consider that the policies relevant in this case include CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy 2006-2031 (the Core Strategy) and saved Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Bough Local Plan (the local plan) which relate to the quality of design of development in general and of residential extensions in particular. The Council also refers to area policy BCA2 of the *Area Based Policies* Supplementary Planning Guidance 2004 (the SPG) which identifies the Swing Gate character area.
5. The houses in Lombardy Drive follow a regular, staggered building line rising up the hill and round a slight bend in the road towards the top. Front gardens are mainly open plan with boundaries often marked by mature vegetation of varying heights and density. Many of the houses have been extended at the side and there have been many alterations to the materials and fenestration of the front elevations including the use of cladding in place of tile hanging.
6. No. 4 is on the east side of the road on the inside of the bend. It is set well back from the road and partially screened from views along the street by tall evergreen trees on the boundary with No. 2 and trees further up the road to the south, and smaller evergreen shrubs on the boundary with No. 6.
7. The proposed two storey front extension would project approximately 2.3m from the front elevation level with the front of the existing garage. The existing flat roof of the garage would be altered to a monopitch tiled roof. This would not be typical of the front elevations of the houses along the street. However, Nos. 4 and 6 are unusual in the immediate context as their roof ridges run parallel to the street in contrast to most of the rest of the houses on both sides of the street which have gables facing the street and garages more or less flush with the front elevation, apart from those at the far end to the north.
8. I consider that although the proposed two storey projecting gable would not be typical, it would not be unacceptable. The existing flat roofed projecting garage is a design feature typical of its time and has little architectural merit. The proposed gable would reflect the prominent gables which are a principal characteristic of most of the other houses along the street, but would remain proportional to and subordinate to the main house. The materials would be similar to those of the existing house apart from the proposed Cedral cladding to the first floor of the front elevation and partial white render.
9. The proposal would respect the character of the existing house and of the street as a whole in terms of its scale, height, bulk and materials. Although it would be larger than normally considered acceptable in the context of the advice on front extensions in Appendix 7, I consider that it would not dominate the street scene and has the benefit of replacing an existing flat roof over the garage with a pitched roof. The proposed materials and fenestration would be appropriate. The advice in BCA2 of the SPG on development within the plot for sites in the Swing Gate area offers no special detailed requirements for extensions other than that they should normally be subordinate to the parent building.
10. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the existing property or the wider street scene and that it does not run

contrary to Core Strategy policies CS11 and CS12, Appendix 7 of the local plan and BCA2 of the SPG.

11. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

Conditions

12. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council, having regard to the tests set out in the Framework. A condition detailing the plans is necessary to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and for the avoidance of doubt. A condition relating to the materials is necessary in order to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development and I have modified it to reflect the use of Cedral cladding and render. The condition relating to the window is necessary to safeguard the residential amenities of adjacent property.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR