



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2023

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/23/3318200

4 Cowdray Close, Pound Hill, Crawley RH10 7BW

- 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 Atul Patel and Mrs Binita Patel against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref CR/2022/0169/FUL, dated 14 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a porch extension, garage conversion, first floor front extension, part single, part two storey side and rear extension to include patio and external change to the appearance of the dwellinghouse with new fenestrations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issue is the effect that the proposed development would have on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
3. The appeal site is situated on the roughly south west side of the sinuous Cowdray Close, where the development is mainly characterised by spaciouly sited dwellings of similar age and styles in verdant plots on both sides of the partly verge lined street. The local landform slopes down from roughly north east to south west. So, most dwellings on the opposite side of the road are above road level, whereas the appeal dwelling and its immediate neighbours are sited a little below it. Whilst some of the mainly wide fronted dwellings, including bungalows, chalet style dwellings and houses, have been altered and/or extended, their simple forms and the street scene spaciousness contribute positively to the local suburban character and to the sense of place.
4. The proposal includes side and rear extensions, which were not a concern of the Council in its reasons for refusal, and I agree. The proposal would also include a front facing gabled first floor extension, which would line up with the front of the present garage next to the porch, in place of the existing front facing cat-slide roof, its flat roofed dormer, and the recessed flat roofed porch.
5. The ridge of the front gabled projection would be lower than the main roof's ridge. However, due to its width, substantial bulk and its deep forward projection at first floor level and above, the front gabled extension would be an unacceptably dominant addition that would harmfully disrupt the simple form of the appeal dwelling. Because the bulk at first floor level and above would be

further forward than the 2 storey parts of the dwellings at 2 and 6 Cowdray Close, on either side, it would harmfully erode the important spaciousness in the Cowdray Close street scene. So, in roughly westward views along the close, the proposal's discordant form and siting would contrast starkly with the simple main roof forms of the dwellings in the foreground, which follow the gentle bend in the road. For the same reasons, if the tall evergreen trees in the front garden were to fail, the front extension would be incongruous in views from around the junction of Cowdray Close with Banks Road.

6. The narrower upper floor front gabled projection at 7 Cowdray Close, on the opposite side of the road, broadly aligns with the 2 storey front of the dwelling next door to roughly east, and the hipped roofed single storey front outshoot at 6 Cowdray Close has little impact on the form of the main dwelling. Because these existing extensions are less prominent, they provide little support for this damaging scheme. Whilst the dwelling at 62 Milton Mount Avenue is within the same neighbourhood, it is roughly a mile away, where the wide range of well set back dwellings are partly screened by the broad avenue of mature trees. So, whilst my colleague was unable to identify any particular material as more appropriate than any other in his appeal decision ref APP/Q3820/D/20/3263865, its site specific circumstances differ from those of the proposal before me.
7. The appellants' suggested alternative hipped roof would not mitigate the bulk of the front facing first floor extension and, as the suggested modifications to the roof pitch and other features lack precision, they could not reasonably be controlled by condition. Moreover, whilst external materials could be controlled by condition if the proposal were to be otherwise acceptable, that would not overcome the harm that the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and to the street scene in Cowdray Close.
8. Therefore, I consider that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policy CH2 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 (LP) which aims to retain or enhance successful places, LP Policy CH3 which seeks high quality design and respect for context, and the thrust of the guidance in the Crawley Borough Council Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) which aims to achieve well-designed places, and for development to be sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

9. I have found that the proposed development would be contrary to the Development Plan when taken as a whole. The other considerations in this case, including the Framework, do not outweigh that conflict.
10. For the reasons given, the appeal should be dismissed.

J Reid

INSPECTOR