



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2023

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12.10.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/23/3324646

29 Merrow Woods, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2LQ

- 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 Simon Persin against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/P/00087, dated 22 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as "The proposed works will include a rear single storey extension, conversion of the garage into habitable space, with a first floor side extension over part of the converted garage and a ground floor extension infill".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for "the proposed works will include a rear single storey extension, conversion of the garage into habitable space, with a first floor side extension over part of the converted garage and a ground floor extension infill" at 29 Merrow Woods, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2LQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/P/00087, dated 22 January 2023, 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: Dwg Nos: EL21; EL22; GA01; GA04 and GA05.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council's reasons for refusal refers to 'saved' Policies G1 and H8 of the Guildford Local Plan (2003). That Plan was replaced by The Guildford Local Plan: Development Management Policies Document adopted on 22 March 2023 (DMPD). I have therefore dealt with the appeal on the basis of the up to date policies in the adopted plan as referred to in the reasons for refusal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development upon:
 - the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area; and,
 - the living conditions of occupiers of 27 Merrow Woods, with particular regard to light and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site relates to a 2 storey detached house. It has a flat roofed garage attached to the side which projects forward of the house. Behind it there is a gap and then another flat roofed side extension which is slightly higher and wider than the garage. House designs vary significantly within the wider housing estate. Unlike most other houses in the surrounding area, the appeal property's gable end faces the road. As a result, the house has a narrower front elevation than other properties nearby.
5. The proposal includes converting the garage and joining it to the side extension behind. A first floor extension is proposed above the converted garage. It would sit back from the garage building line, level with the main house, and extend to where the garage joins the other side extension. It would have a mono pitched roof matching the angle of the main house roof.
6. The proposed side extensions would meet the guidelines set out in the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (2018 (SPD) in respect of the roof pitch and separation distance between the proposed development and the neighbouring house. The first floor extension, although level with the front of the house, would be stepped back behind the ground floor building line and sits below the main house roof ridge. The extensions would be slightly more than half the width of that part of the house which faces the road and thus conflict with guidance in the SPD in this regard. However, the existing front elevation is narrow compared to other houses and can accommodate the proposed development without appearing out of scale or visually intrusive and thus accords with the objectives of the SPD.
7. The proposed windows would be larger than those of the main house, and on the first floor their top edge would be angled parallel to the roof slope. Their vertical emphasis correlates with the vertical boarding that would clad the walls. I consider that they are appropriate to the context of the extensions, which in terms of their design and use of materials complements, rather than copies, that of the main house. Given the diversity of house designs in the surrounding area, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not appear dominant, visually intrusive, or so out of keeping that it would harm the character or appearance of the house and surrounding area.
8. The rear extension would be the same width as the existing conservatory although it would extend back further and be slightly higher with a flat roof rather than a shallow pitched roof. It would not appear excessive in terms of its scale, and the materials would match that of the proposed side extensions. I therefore agree with the Council's assessment that the rear extension would be acceptable.
9. The proposal would not therefore conflict with Policies H4, D4 and D5 of the (DMPD), the SPD, the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and the National Design Guide (2021) which require high quality development that respects the existing character and appearance of the area and is not visually dominant.

Living conditions

10. There are no windows on the side elevation of the neighbouring house, No 27, and its rear windows face towards the southwest and have access to sunlight for much of the day, apart from in the late afternoon and evenings. At these times, because the rear of the appeal property is set further back than No 27, it causes some overshadowing to the neighbour's garden and rear windows. The first floor extension would sit well forward of the back wall of the host property and as such would be mostly within its shadow during the afternoons and evenings. It would not therefore cause any appreciable increase in overshadowing.
11. The proposed rear extension would project approximately 2 metres beyond the rear building line of No 27. Given the position of No 27's rear windows and the gap between the houses, views of the proposed extension would be peripheral, and it would not significantly reduce daylight to them or result in a sense of enclosure, or have an overbearing effect, as the Council suggest. Overall, on this main issue I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of No 27 and would not therefore conflict with Policies H4 and D5 of the DMPD which require that development should not unacceptably impact on the amenity of neighbours.

Conditions

12. I have attached the standard time limit condition and a plans condition as this provides certainty. However, given that the materials would differ from that of the main house, and I have found them to be acceptable, it is not necessary to impose a condition requiring matching materials, as suggested by the Council.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR