



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2023

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/23/3323447

Tregaron, Grange Drive, Woking GU21 4BU

- 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 Sole against the decision of the Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2023/0151, dated 21 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey front, side and rear extension following demolition of existing conservatory, garage and store, increase in roof ridge height, new pitched roof to the side extension, 5no roof lights and the erection of 2No front dormers
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area and the host property; and
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties with regard to privacy, overshadowing and overbearing impact.

Reasons

3. Grange Drive is a short cul de sac of four, detached properties which are set back from the southern side of the road with trees running along the northern edge. Tregaron is a traditional, brick, two-storey house located at the end and set at an angle to the road. It has a large plot with the property sited to the northern end with a detached flat-roof garage extending close to the boundary with Well House which is part of a more recent development accessed from Grange Road. Overall, the residential area has a spacious and landscaped character.
4. The proposal would create a substantial two-storey property facilitated by the demolition of the existing garage and conservatory. Its appearance would be significantly altered, resulting in a rendered, hipped roofed property with the additional side element slightly set down with dormer windows to the front. Whilst it would be a large property and have a more contemporary appearance, the area is formed of individual properties which vary in scale and design. The appellant has referred me to another property in Grange Drive, The Barn, which has similarly been extended to the side and has introduced different

materials (in that case cream timber boarding). There are also other newer and extended properties within the locality and as such, I find, that the form and architectural style would assimilate with the area.

5. The proposal would, however, add significant massing to the side and extend close to the northern boundary. Currently, the flat roof garage provides spacing to the side of the property providing a visual break and permitting views beyond. Whereas the scale of the resultant development would have a dominating impact and diminish this spaciousness. Whilst I agree with the appellant that the hipped roof reduces the bulk to the southern end, there would be a tight relationship with Little Garth and Well House and an enclosure to the end of the road. This would both be uncharacteristic of the low-density area and have a visually harmful impact on the appearance of Grange Drive and the relationship with the adjoining properties.
6. As a consequence, I find that the proposal would not respect the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), Supplementary Planning Document – Woking Design (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework, which promote well-designed developments which respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area, and pay regard to the scale, layout and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land.

Living Conditions

7. The relationship between Tregaron and Well House is front to rear, nonetheless, they directly share a boundary. The Council's Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) advises at paragraph 4.10 that *for two-storey accommodation (including dwellings with first-floor dormer windows), a separation distance of approximately 20m will be adequate to prevent overlooking of dwellings of a similar or lesser height.*
8. Well House is a modern property with accommodation over three floors. The rear elevation includes several windows including a projecting element with a Juliet balcony to the first floor. Whilst the extension to Tregaron would be at a slightly oblique angle it would bring the separation between the properties to less than 20m. The presence and proximity of the two-storey development to the boundary would, in my view, have an imposing impact and would not be reflective of the spacious layout, which contributes to the character of the area and which the occupiers currently benefit from. I acknowledge that the proposed windows to the front elevation could be obscurely glazed, nevertheless, the relationship is such that there would still be a perception of overlooking.
9. To the other side, Little Garth has a similar alignment to Tregaron and has a rear-to-rear relationship. The separation between the dwellings is less than 20m although the northern end of Tregaron more or less aligns with the southern end of Little Garth. The area behind each dwelling is relatively narrow with the main area of the garden to both dwellings to the side (south) rather than to the rear.
10. An existing substantial hedge runs along the northern section of the shared boundary and screens the rear of Little Garth. There will however be an existing outlook from Tregaron over its southern garden. As a result of the proposal, the already limited gap between the first-floor windows and the

shared boundary would be reduced by approximately a third. This would, together with the elongated form and increased massing present a substantial elevation with numerous windows towards Little Garth. In my view, this would result in an increased loss of privacy which would be to the detriment of the occupier's enjoyment of their property.

11. The increased size of the appeal property would create some additional overshadowing, but in my opinion, and the absence of any specific evidence before me, it would not be of a level that would significantly impact the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties.
12. In conclusion, the proposal would have a harmful impact on the relationship with both Little Garth and Well House in terms of overlooking and overbearing impact. Thus, it would fail to accord with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) and the SPD, which, amongst other things, seek to achieve satisfactory relationships with adjoining properties and to avoid significant harmful impacts due to loss of privacy, an overbearing effect, proximity or outlook.

Other Matters

13. The design of the proposal has positively evolved following a number of previous schemes, and there are aspects of the design which reflect the guidance in the SPD, such as the subservient form of the side extension. The plot is of a sufficient size to accommodate the scale of development and there would undoubtedly be enhancements to the accommodation for the occupiers. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have found, and each case is to be considered on its own merits.

Conclusion

14. For reasons set out and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR