



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2023

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23RD November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/D/23/3326608

Winkton, Wynnswick Road, Seer Green, Buckinghamshire HP9 2XW

- 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 & Mrs H Frost-Wellings against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref PL/23/1009/FA dated 22 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is single storey front extension and associated landscaping works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since the determination of the application, and the submission of this appeal, a revised National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) was adopted on 5 September 2023. The refusal reason generically references the Framework however, it is not considered that this impacts upon the determination of this appeal given the main changes to the Framework.
3. I note that during the submission, amended plans were provided to the Council (2023/100/001B and 2023/100/002C as set out in the appellant's statement). For the avoidance of doubt I have determined the proposal based upon the amended drawings as confirmed in 3.3 of the appellant's statement. The Council acknowledge receipt of these amended drawings within their delegated report.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the existing property and local area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is within a residential area and is located at the end of a cul-de-sac - Wynnswick Road. The host property is one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings and I note from both the submissions before me, and my site visit, that the adjoining property (Hollyhurst) has been extended as a result of permission granted under CH/2017/0789/FA. As a result of this extension, I find that the pair of semi-detached dwellings have, to some extent, been unbalanced but the setback at first-floor level as well as different brickwork does, to some extent, allow the original pair of semi-detached dwellings to be

legible in terms of both the character and appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings with the building line maintained.

6. At the time of my site visit I found that the properties within Wynnswick Road were varied in terms of construction, design, and overall appearance with some evidence of small front projections forward of the front elevations. When approaching the appeal site its siting means that it is not readily visible within general views within the street scene due to the adjoining property, Hollyhurst, being more centralised in relation to the end of the road. In addition, I noted that there are garages to the front of the appeal site as shown on the submitted plans. The garaging for the appeal site is located immediately adjacent to, but with a small gap between, the neighbouring property's garage.
7. The proposal seeks to extend the front of the host property and would see it linked to the existing garaging to the front of the property. The extension would be single-storey and finished in materials to match the existing dwelling as well as having a flat roof, with parapet detail, with a roof lantern. Whilst I acknowledge that the adjacent property, as outlined above, has been substantially extended, the original building line of the pair of semi-detached dwellings is retained and a proposed single-storey front extension would fail to respect this established building line. Most notably it would connect with the existing garaging as discussed below.
8. Whilst I acknowledge that the scale of the proposal, in isolation, is not overly large, its location to the front of the host dwelling, as well as its design, would mean the proposal would visually dominate the existing front elevation of the property. The proposal fails to fully respect the scale and proportions of the existing dwelling as a result of the intention to extend to the front of the host property and attach to the existing garaging resulting in continuous built form from the host dwelling up to the site boundary where it joins with the neighbouring garage before being adjacent to Wynnswick Road. The proposed front extension would introduce an alien feature which would represent too great a protrusion from the principal elevation and overall result in continuous built form, from the front elevation to the edge of the appeal site and Wynnswick Road (due to the neighbouring garage).
9. It should be kept clearly in mind that character and appearance are separate matters. Character is the intrinsic qualities of an area whereas appearance is the visible qualities of an area. I acknowledge that the proposal itself would have more limited visibility beyond the appeal site boundary and its impact would, visually, be limited in terms of the street scene. Despite this I find that the siting, protrusion from the principal elevation, and attachment to the existing garage would, overall, represent over development of the site. It can be seen, from the proposed site plan, that very little of the front of the site would be left free of built form and I find that an extension of this nature, forward of the front elevation and covering the appeal site frontage in this manner, would be uncharacteristic for the area.
10. I do not find that the existing garages already result in a perceived breach of the existing building line due to the clear separation which currently exists between the front elevation of the host property and the garages. The garages are currently clearly freestanding residential outbuildings to the front of the appeal site whereas the proposal would physically extend to the front of the

host property and attach to the existing garaging which would result in the impacts which I have outlined above.

11. In addition, I find that the proposal's design would be inconsistent with the simple nature of the host dwelling with the proposed fenestration and roof lantern being uncharacteristic features compared to both the host property and the surrounding area. Whilst the property is stated to benefit from an extant permission, which would allow a replacement roof on the existing garaging to a pitched roof, the roof lantern would likely still protrude above the garaging. This element would also result in an uncomfortable visual relationship between the proposed roof lantern and the first-floor window as the roof lantern would be level with the bottom of the window (and off centre) which contributes further to the proposal relating poorly to the character of the host dwelling. It should also be kept in mind that during hours of darkness, any lighting within the proposed kitchen would result in the roof lantern being illuminated which would further add to the impact of the proposal within the vicinity.
12. The additional gable features, seen at the time of my site inspection and as shown in the appellant's photographs, are noted but it can be seen that the setting of the white barge boarding and brickwork clearly maintain the visual prominence of the original gable features associated with the semi-detached pair. Whilst I accept there is not a strong uniformity in terms of building lines in the area, it is clear, from my site visit, that whilst there are some limited projections from front elevations on properties within Wynnswick Road, there is nothing of the scale which is proposed within this appeal which would then result in a cumulative collection of built form as outlined above.
13. Whilst the appellant states that the proposal would not detract from the character of the area due to the proposed extension not being visible from views within the cul-de-sac, as outlined above, character and appearance are two separate matters, and a lack of or limited visibility does not automatically overcome issues relating to character. The commentary regarding the officer's assessment is noted, however, whilst the proposal could be argued to be subordinate in terms of a volumetric assessment, I find that visually the proposal would present as bulky as it would direct and absorb views of the front elevation due to obscuring a large amount the host dwelling combined with the proposed roof lantern.
14. It is acknowledged that the site is not located within a Conservation Area or an established residential area of special character nor an area of outstanding natural beauty. Despite not being in such designations, where there is acknowledged to be more emphasis on some matters, this does not reduce the requirement for an emphasis on generally good design which is character appropriate for both the host dwelling and the surrounding area. It is acknowledged that that there is no harm caused to the enjoyment of neighbouring property's amenities.
15. The appellant references Hedgerow House on Bottom Lane. That proposal is not, as the appellant notes, on the same road or in the vicinity of the appeal site which is the subject of this appeal and additionally it did not consume the appeal site frontage to the road boundary as part of a semi-detached pair as the proposal before me would. In addition, I note that the applications referred to from 2007, 2008 and 2009 would have been considered partly against differing planning policy (albeit I acknowledge that the Chiltern Local Plan was

originally adopted in 1997 with alterations adopted in 2001) but the current Core Strategy was adopted in 2011, the Council's Residential Extensions and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in 2013 and the Framework was introduced originally from 2012. Each case must be considered on its own merits.

16. 30 Howard Road (CH/2003/1846/FA) is noted but again, I would reiterate that apart from the Local Plan, this application, being 2003, would predate the Core Strategy, Council SPD, and earliest versions of the Framework. Notwithstanding this, as the appellant outlines, the conservatory is to the side of the property and does not result in a cumulative impact I have identified within the current appeal site as a result of attaching the front elevation of the host property to the existing garaging with built form.
17. Application reference CH/2017/0789/FA which was for a part two-storey, part single-storey side extension. From the plans which are before me this scheme is of limited relevance and of no comparison to the appeal proposal. I note the appellant's commentary, on page 13 of their statement, regarding the inconsistencies of the proposal approved within CH/2017/0789/FA against the relevant local plan policies. It is, of course, acknowledged that this application referred to is the adjacent property (the other half of the semi-detached pair) to the appeal site but the matters which were discussed by officers are different to that within the case before me which relates to a front projection. Whilst consistency is key in decision making, in this case I do not find that this case referred to by the appellant bears any resemblance to the proposals which are before me within this appeal, and I attribute little weight to the inclusion of this case within the determination of this appeal.
18. Application reference CH/2017/1247/FA allowed an increase in roof ridge height with a gabled alteration and rear dormer windows to facilitate habitable accommodation in the roof space with a single-storey front extension. That approval is acknowledged to have allowed a front porch extending to just over 3 metres from the front elevation, however, this was a porch structure which is of smaller scale and footprint compared to the proposal which is before me which would create an entire room encompassing a kitchen as well a utility. Again, I note the appellant's commentary that the proposal at Woodstacks, in their opinion, failed to comply with every aspect of the local plan policies but the starting point for determination is the Local Plan and I have assessed the appeal before me based upon its own merits.
19. I note permission reference CH/2008/0187/FA which was for a two-storey rear extension to both the appeal site and the adjoining dwelling as well as alterations to the existing garage at the appeal site incorporating a replacement roof. On the basis of this permission being extant, there would be the ability to make the alterations to the roof of the garage and join the garages together (albeit the separation between the current garage buildings is minimal (around 1 foot). The Council's report acknowledged that the proposed pitched roof to the existing garage block would represent an improvement would therefore have no adverse effect upon the existing building or its appearance within the street scene. Despite this, I do not consider that alteration to existing garage building(s) are of direct comparison to the construction of an entirely new front extension to the host dwelling. Regardless of ridge height, as a comparison to the proposed roof lantern, I do

not find that the visual appearance of a roof lantern is comparable, in terms of design, to the replacement of a garage roof with a pitched roof.

20. Due to the depth and siting on the principal elevation, the proposal would fail to respect the established building line of the semi-detached pair within which it is sited. Whilst the proposal is acknowledged to be limited in general visibility within the wider street scene, this does not overcome the harm to the character of both the existing property and local area as a result of projection from the front elevation, attaching to the existing garaging, which would result in the front of the appeal site being covered in built form which would then appear as an uncharacteristic front projection across the entire front of the site. The proposal would be contrary to Chiltern District Local Plan 1997 (Consolidated September 2007 and November 2011) (LP) Policy GC1 which seeks to ensure that development is in scale with its surroundings relating well in terms of overall dimensions to all features which form the setting of the application site, LP Policy H13 which seeks to ensure that proposals are appropriate in terms of character and appearance of the streetscene or locality, and LP Policy H15 which seeks to ensure that the siting of an extension relates well to both the existing dwelling and the adjoining street scene.
21. The proposal would also be contrary to the Core Strategy for Chiltern District 2011 Policy CS20 which requires proposals to reflect and respect the character of the surrounding area. It is also acknowledged that, whilst guidance, the SPD, in general principles, requires that any extensions should be able to harmonise with a building, striking a balanced visual relationship with its existing features and integrating in such a way that it does not adversely affect the character of the locality as well as the overarching objectives of the Framework which seeks to ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of an area and are sympathetic to the local character.

Other Matters

22. I note that it is stated that the Council would not accept further correspondence once the decision was made to refuse the proposal, however, had the appellant sought to rely on the use of an extant permission as evidence in support for the alterations to the existing garaging roof, this should ideally have been raised at the point of application and not relied upon as a later submission as to the acceptability of the proposals.
23. Concerns have also been raised regarding whether a detailed site visit was carried out as well as concern being raised as to the detail of the overall assessment of the proposal. The appeal before me is not accompanied by an application for costs and it is outside the scope of this appeal to consider the handling of the application prior to the point an appeal was submitted.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR