



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 November 2023

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/D/23/3326206

52 Thyme Close, Chineham, Hampshire, RG24 8XG

- 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 Hopkins against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00758/HSE, dated 21 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is a garage roof conversion involving raising the ridge line, with front dormers & velux windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the living conditions at 12 and 13 Fennel Close, with particular regard to visual impact.

Procedural Matter

3. The application was amended through the submission of revised plans to which I have had regard.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey, detached dwelling occupying a recessed position at the terminal end of a small residential cul-de-sac. It sits tucked into a corner location with an 'L-shaped' footprint that includes a single-storey, pitched roof front projection incorporating originally a double width garage and link. The dwelling's left-hand side elevation, which includes its two-storey gable end and contiguous rear wall of the garage and link, is set away from the site's eastern boundary by the width of a pedestrian walkway which gives access from the side end of the garage to the rear garden to the south side of the house. The appeal site's eastern boundary is common with the rear garden boundaries of Nos 11, 12 and 13 Fennel Close, comprising two-storey, detached dwellings orientated perpendicular to No 52.
5. The appeal proposal would involve the creation of new living space at first-floor over the garage and link, to be achieved by raising the existing ridge and incorporating two-dormer windows to the front, west-facing elevation, and four rooflights to the rear, facing east. The new roof would be steeper pitched than

- the existing, with a half-hip end and increased eaves overhangs to the front and rear.
6. The width of the rear garden to 12 Fennel Close spans principally the width of the appeal property's side gable and the single-storey link to the front projecting garage. Roughly half the rear garden to 13 Fennel Close spans the width of the garage to No 52. The remainder spans the narrow space to the side/end of the garage at the appeal site and a small part of the rear garden to 51 Thyme Close, where they share a common boundary. None of the rear gardens in the area are particularly deep and when viewed in the outlook from both Nos 12 and 13, and from their respective gardens, the visual presence of No 52 is prominent in both instances. In the case of No 12, the two-storey gable is dominant very close to the rear garden boundary, but with some relief offered by the single-storey scale and bulk of the existing garage and link. When seen from No 13, the single-storey garage is apparent, but due to its scale and bulk I found it to be not overly oppressive.
 7. At present the ridge height over the link sits just below the two-storey eaves of the main part of the house, with a slight step up to the roofline over the garage. According to undisputed figures provided by the Council, the ridge would increase from a current height of 4.9m to 6.7m, where it would tie into the dwelling's existing roof approximately half-way up its front facing slope. As a consequence, the appeal proposal would add significant bulk and mass to the existing garage and link. Its current subservient single-storey scale and form in relation to the main part of the dwelling would be transformed to become a visually more imposing and prominent part of the building overall. It would impose itself on the outlook from the rear of 12 Fennel Close, and from the garden, as a considerably more dominant, overbearing, and enclosing presence, removing the relief offered by the existing building's arrangement. When viewed from No 13, the additional scale and bulk of the garage and link would transform a modest part of the building into a visually imposing and dominant presence at close quarters.
 8. The appellant has pointed to a levels difference between the appeal site and properties in Fennel Close, but I observed nothing of significance that would mitigate the harmful visual impact that would be had upon the outlook from Nos 12 and 13 and from their rear garden spaces. Whilst there may be some additional overshadowing of both neighbouring properties gardens later in the day, I have not been presented with any substantive evidence to show that this would be significant. Nevertheless, the overbearing impact upon both neighbouring properties would harm the neighbours' outlooks. By making their properties feel hemmed in and oppressed by the scale and bulk of the roof alterations, the proposal would represent a form of development that paragraph 11.9 of the Council's *Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document July 2018* expressly seeks to avoid. Although I find no conflict with Policy EM12 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029), adopted in 2016, which deals with pollution, by failing to respect the amenities of neighbouring properties the proposal would not display the quality of design that is required by Policy EM10. For the same reasons the proposal would conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's objectives for achieving well-designed places.
 9. I have noted a very similar extension to a similar property at 54 Thyme Close, which was given planning permission (Ref 23/00261/HSE) in March 2023, and

which I saw to be constructed. The appellant draws comparisons between this and the appeal proposal but the relationship between No 54 and its nearest neighbour at No 53 has nothing in common with the juxtaposition of the appeal property in relation to Nos 12 and 13 Fennel Close.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the living conditions at 12 and 13 Fennel Close. The harm that I have identified and the conflict with local and national planning policy means that the proposal would not represent a sustainable form of development. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR