



## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2023 by Max Webb BA(Hons) MSc

**Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 1 March 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/23/3327815**

**60 Kiln Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham RG40 3PH**

- 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 Akroyd against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 230830, dated 3 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2023.
  - The development proposed is single storey front extension and conversion of an existing garage.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### Procedural Matters

3. The Government published on 19 December 2023 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.
4. The Council adopted the made version of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2038 (NDP) on 21 September 2023. The contents of the policy relevant to this appeal remain substantively unchanged from the draft version provided at the time this appeal was submitted. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the NDP, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.

### Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

## **Reasons for the Recommendation**

6. The appeal site is a detached property with an existing garage projecting to the front. There is an open, spacious frontage to the property which is reflective of many of the properties in the vicinity, and this forms part of the character of the area. Although there is not a uniform building line on this street, properties on this side are generally set similar distances back from the road, leaving these open frontages. There are garages visible to the front on other properties in the vicinity, with some to the side of the properties and some projecting forward. Nevertheless, they generally fit with the distance set back from the road and leave spacious frontages.
7. The proposal would further extend to the front, creating a long, single-storey projection that would appear out of proportion with the host dwelling. The proposal would extend significantly beyond neighbouring properties towards the street, which would appear out of place with the rhythm of existing frontages. It would also diminish the undeveloped, spacious frontage of the property. Consequently, it would be detrimental to the character of the street scene and would not make a positive contribution to the area in terms of the relationship with existing built form and spaces around the buildings.
8. The property at 76 Kiln Ride also has a similarly sized projection towards the street, however due to the position of the neighbouring properties, it does not extend significantly beyond its neighbours, as the appeal proposal would. Additionally, the projection at No 76 was, at the time of the site visit, well screened from view by substantial planting, whereas the appeal site is more exposed. In any case, I have not been provided with further information on No 76, such as when the development took place, what the site looked like previously and the policy context at the time of the development. The development at No 76 does not, therefore, justify the harmful proposal on the appeal site.
9. Overall, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy (2010), which together support development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment and is of an appropriate mass, layout, built form and character. It would likewise not comply with Policy D3 of the NDP, which outlines how proposals should positively contribute to the character of the area by having regard to existing built-up coverage of each plot, building lines and rhythm of plot frontages.
10. It would also go against the aims of the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012), which explains that front extensions should not project significantly forward of the building line and that garages should not be sited in front gardens and not project forward of the building line of a property. It would also conflict with the aims of the Framework, which looks to ensure development is visually attractive as a result of layout and sympathetic to local character.

## **Other Matters**

11. The appellants have suggested that the design and functionality would provide a linked unit to reduce costs and enable accessibility for elderly homeowners. These are private benefits for the occupiers however, so carry limited weight

and do not outweigh the harm that would arise to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

12. The proposal would conflict with the development plan and national policy, and there are no material considerations that justify granting planning permission in conflict with the development plan. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Max Webb*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

### **Inspector's Decision**

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and agree with the reasoning and conclusion set out above. On that basis the appeal is dismissed.

*L McKay*

INSPECTOR