



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2024 by S Indermaur MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/23/3329562

9 Newbury Lane, Compton, Newbury, West Berkshire RG20 6PB

- 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 Mrs S Campbell against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/00686/HOUSE.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey front and side extension and part two-storey part single storey rear extension.
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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.

Preliminary Matters

3. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was published in December 2023. 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. On 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales became "National Landscapes" (NLs). I have therefore made reference to NLs in my recommendation and specifically referred to the North Wessex Downs AONB as the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NWDNL). However, for the avoidance of doubt, the legal designation and policy status of these areas are unchanged, and I have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of proposal on the character and appearance of the of the area and the landscape and scenic beauty of the NWDNL.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. There are a variety of housing styles in the area, however the appeal property is seen as part of a pair with another semidetached dwelling. The pair of dwellings display a similar appearance with red brick facades, UPVC windows with concrete cills and lintels and hipped roofs, sharing a central chimney stack. The adjoining neighbour has already been extended with the addition of a mono-pitch single storey extension to the rear. This pair are situated perpendicular to the road and the appeal property is located further away than its adjoining neighbour. Due to their positioning, both the front and rear elevations are highly visible from the street scene.
7. The proposed front extension would be set down from the existing ridge and would replicate the existing roof form and pitch. However, as the appeal property is viewed in context with No 7, adding a front extension would cause a distinct loss of symmetry and uniformity between the dwellings, diminishing what is currently a harmonious façade not significantly affected by the single storey extensions to No 7.
8. Whilst No 7 has a rear extension, it is single storey and is not overly prominent in the street scene. The single storey part of the proposed rear extension would be largely screened from view. However, the two-storey section would still be clearly visible due to its scale and position on elevated ground, despite being set back from the road. Consequently, it would appear prominent within the street scene, particularly in the context of the much smaller bungalow next door.
9. The proposed side extension would be set back from the front elevation and it would not rise above the existing eaves level. It would also be set well away from the road, so would be less visible than the other extensions proposed. Therefore, by itself the side extension would be relatively modest and would not have a significant impact on the pair or on the surrounding area.
10. Nevertheless, the nature of the appeal site is such that the cumulative effect of the proposed extensions would be clearly visible. The proposal would add considerable depth and bulk to the dwelling and would dominate and be disproportionate to the existing building and the pair. The resulting scale of the dwelling would be highly noticeable from the street scene and at odds with the simple form and modest scale of the attached neighbour. Consequently, taken together the proposed extensions would not respect the neighbouring property in scale, siting or style. For these reasons, despite being in an area of mixed character, the resulting dwelling would appear incongruous and harmful to the appearance of the area and would neither respect nor enhance the character and appearance of the area.
11. There is considerable variation in house designs and styles locally and there are examples of dwellings that have front, side and/or rear extensions. However, these properties are either seen in a different context to the appeal site set parallel to the road so the rear is not easily visible, or do not demonstrate the same cumulative scale of extensions as are proposed here. Therefore, they do not have the same impact as the appeal proposal and do not justify this proposal.
12. The proposed extensions would be readily seen from the street scene but would be seen in the context of other residential development in a settlement

and would not change the general landscape character of the area. Nor would it affect the scenic beauty of this part of the NWDNL, which is characterised by village development. Consequently, I find no harm in these respects. This does not outweigh the harm to the appearance of the area however.

13. There is sufficient space to accommodate the proposed extensions whilst still leaving a generous garden and separation with neighbouring properties. In addition, the materials, windows and detailing would match the existing and attached dwelling. However, these factors would not mitigate the harm identified from the cumulative scale of extensions proposed.
14. For the reasons detailed above, the proposed development would cause harm to the appearance of the area but not to the character of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies ADPP1, CS14, and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and Policy C8 of the Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 – 2037 (NDP), which together seek development that has high quality and sustainable design which respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
15. The proposal would not harm the landscape and scenic beauty of the NWDNL however, therefore there would be no conflict with Core Strategy Policy ADPP5 which sets out specific requirements for development in the NL. The information before me also indicates that the proposal could comply with NDP Policy C3 which aims to achieve a high level of sustainable design and energy efficiency. The lack of conflict with these policies does not outweigh the conflict with other elements of the development plan, however.
16. Furthermore, there would be conflict with the Framework, which seeks to resist development of poor design, and with the design guidance in the House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance 2004 and the Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document 2006.

Other Matters

17. The Council has raised concerns about the effect of the proposal on the amenities of the neighbour to the south but has not identified which amenities or which neighbour. There would be no windows facing No 7 and the depth of the two-storey extensions would not intrude significantly into the outlook from the nearest windows. The proposal would be set well away from any other neighbour such that it would have no harmful impact on their living conditions. Therefore, the proposal would not cause harm to the living conditions of the occupants of any neighbouring properties by way of outlook, privacy or light.
18. The proposal could make the appeal building more energy efficient through thermally efficient materials, loft and wall insulation. However, I have very little detail of these measures and the extent to which they meet the policies and objectives of the NPD. Therefore, I only give this limited weight. There would be benefits of having extra space in the property to accommodate for a family. However, these would be private benefits, and carry limited weight.
19. Although the proposal has been amended to reduce the overall scale and massing, the current proposal would still overwhelm the existing dwelling. The proposal would make more efficient use of the appeal site as encouraged by national and local policy. However, as it relates to only one dwelling, this is a matter to which I afford very limited weight. The appellant advises that a large

housing development is to be built elsewhere in the village. This would not change the character or appearance of the appeal site or its immediate surroundings however and would not mitigate the harm identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

20. The proposal would not harm the character of the area or the landscape and scenic beauty of the NWDNL, or the living conditions of neighbours. It would however harm the appearance of the area and would not achieve the high standard of design required by local and national policies. I afford great weight to the conflict with the design policies of the development plan, which are fundamental to what the plan seeks to achieve, and to the conflict with the design policies of the Framework.
21. There are no material considerations, including the benefits of the scheme, which are individually or cumulatively of sufficient weight to mitigate the harm and resulting development plan conflict. Therefore, there is no justification to determine the application otherwise than in accordance with the development plans. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Indermaur

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

22. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and I agree with the reasoning and recommendation set out above. On that basis the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR