



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2024

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/24/3343085

7 Haroldslea Drive, Horley RH6 9DT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr A Poole against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02583/HHOLD
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey side extension, a two storey rear extension and a loft conversion. A new storm porch to be constructed to the front elevation and the existing parking area to be extended.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development set out on the application form explains the rationale for the proposed extensions. Whilst I have taken this into account, it need not be recorded in the description of development in the header above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - a) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and on the local area, and
 - b) The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the neighbours at Nos 5 and 9 Haroldslea Drive, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Issue a) Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property is a two storey, semi-detached dwelling on the north side of Haroldslea Drive which is within a predominantly residential area with a mix of both semi-detached and detached properties. Open gaps to the side between properties, particularly at first floor level and above are a feature of the street scene and contribute to the well-spaced and verdant character and appearance of the local area.

5. The proposal would erect a two storey side extension set back from the front of the property and extending across the rear of the existing property for a depth of 6500mm, following the demolition of the existing single storey rear extension. At first floor level the side and rear extension would be reduced in width and depth. The side extension would change the roof from a hipped to a gable with the first floor side addition also being a gable with its ridge line being set down from the main roof. There would be a loft conversion and the plane of the rear elevation at first floor would be continued up to roof level as a gable with a part crown roof, with a flat roof and pitched tiled sides. An enclosed porch would be added to the front of the property.
6. The rear extension, and particularly its design form at roof level would be a very bulky addition to the existing property. With its gable rear elevation at first floor and extending to roof level leading to a part crown roof with a large area of flat roof and steeply pitched side roof slopes, the loft conversion would be unsympathetic in its design and form to the existing and more traditional roof form of the semi-detached property. This would be harmful to the existing character and appearance of the dwelling.
7. Whilst the extension to the side would reduce the open gap to the side of the property, it would maintain a gap at first floor level and above. However, the combined effect of the length of the side extension and the overall width of the rear extension would add considerably to the overall scale and massing of the existing property. They would, when taken all together, overwhelm the scale and proportions of the existing property as well as be harmful to its design and character.
8. With a small number of exceptions, pitched and hipped roofs remain a predominant feature in the local street scene. The proposed gable roof form to the existing roof followed through to the proposed side addition would be visually intrusive and detract from the predominant pattern of development in the local area. There would be limited views of the rear extensions from the front of the property, but they would be seen from neighbouring properties and rear gardens. The over dominant form of the extensions, and particularly the rear extension and loft conversion would detract from the more traditional pattern of development and character and appearance of the local area.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed extensions would not respect but would harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and of the local area. This would conflict with Policy DES1 of the Reigate & Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan 2019 (DM Plan), the guidance in the Council's SPG: Householder Extensions and Alterations (SPG) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), and in particular Section 12, all of which, amongst other matters, seek a high quality of design which respects the local context.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to a variety of extensions and alterations which have been undertaken elsewhere in the vicinity. Each proposal must be assessed on its individual merits but in so far as the information has been made available to me, I have taken them into account. However, they do not appear directly comparable with the proposal before me and do not lead me to a different conclusion, given the harm I have found under this issue.

Issue b) Living Conditions

11. The neighbouring property to the east of the appeal site at No 9 has a car port to the side and is separated by an existing gap between the two properties and has a single storey rear extension under a flat roof. Although the proposed extension at the appeal property would bring built development closer to the shared boundary it would step back at first floor level both at the side and the rear. As a result of the remaining gap and the proposed set backs at first floor level as well as the relationship with the property to the east, I do not consider that there would be an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the neighbours at No 9, with particular regard to outlook.
12. There is a staggered rear elevation as existing with the attached neighbour to the west at No 5, and at first floor level No 5 projects further to the rear than the appeal property. With the proposed rear extension, the ground floor at the appeal property would extend further to the rear than the rear elevation at No 5 at ground floor. At first floor and given the proposed set back, the first floor would be set slightly in front of the rear elevation at No 5.
13. I have taken into account the garden boundary fence between the appeal property and No 5 as well as the generous garden sizes. However, and although single storey in form, the combined depth of the proposed rear extension together with its pitched roof form so close to the shared boundary with No 5 would be an over dominant addition which would be oppressive in views from the rear windows of No 5 and from within the rear garden.
14. The proposal would materially harm the living conditions of the neighbours at No 5, with particular regard to outlook. This would conflict with Policy DES1 of the DM Plan and the SPG as well as the Framework and in particular paragraph 135f), all of which amongst other matters seek a high quality of design which respects the amenities of existing and future occupiers.

Other Considerations

15. There is a protected tree in the front garden of the appeal site under the Tree Preservation Order: TPO RE424. Were no other matters of concern, and planning permission were to be granted, a condition could be imposed to require protection works to the tree during the construction works. The Council raised no concern in this respect.
16. I have taken into account the family related reasons for seeking the additional and improved accommodation. I have also noted the concerns that the retention of a hipped roof would not enable a viable loft conversion to be undertaken but this does not persuade me that the particular proposal before me should be permitted, given the harm I have concluded under both of my main issues.
17. Given its modest dimensions and proposed siting and design, there would be no objection to the storm porch as proposed, and the Council raised no concerns in this regard.

Conclusion

18. The proposal would not accord with the development plan and there are no other material considerations to override this finding. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including in representations, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR