



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2025

by **D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/24/3355242

2 Dale Lodge Road, Sunningdale, Ascot SL5 0LY

- 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 James Crane against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref is 24/01597.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing rear conservatory and construction of double storey side extensions, single storey side and rear extension, single storey front porch extension and renovation of existing property to alter materials.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Procedural Matter

2. The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in December 2024 but its contents do not alter the assessment of this appeal.

Main Issues

3. It is considered that the main issues are the effect of the proposed development on (a) the character and appearance of the surrounding area, in particular the streetscene, and (b) a protected species.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property is an altered 2-storey detached dwelling occupying a corner plot situated within a predominately residential area within which there are a mix of dwelling types and sizes. As identified by the appellant, there are variations in the design of the dwellings, their orientation to the roads and choice of external materials, including brick, render and boarding. Some of the dwellings have been altered with side extensions. There is no cohesive character or appearance associated with the design of the surrounding dwellings. However, the dwellings possess gable and hipped roofs and are set back a similar distance from the footways to the rear of front gardens. These gardens are variously landscaped and used for off-street parking.
5. The proposed development includes the erection of what would appear to be 2-storey extensions either side of the host property when viewed from Dale Lodge

Road. One extension would replace a detached garage and the second would be a first floor extension erected above existing single storey additions. At the rear a single storey extension would replace, in part, a conservatory. From the road, and taking into account the choice of external materials, the resulting property would have the appearance of a new dwelling and this appeal has been assessed on this basis.

6. The scale and massing of the resulting property would be visually and physically larger than other dwellings fronting Dale Lodge Road. However, it would not appear a cramped form of development because the size of this corner plot is larger than the curtilages of the other dwellings. Although a porch is proposed, there would remain a similar relationship between the resulting property and the footway as other dwellings fronting Dale Lodge Road. The use of the front garden for parking would replicate the situation at other dwellings fronting the road. Overall, the rhythm and appearance of the streetscene along Dale Lodge Road would not be materially harmed by the appeal scheme.
7. By reason of the design, the resulting property would have a double fronted appearance with a central element with a gable roof facing towards the road and the side extensions possessing hipped roof forms. The eaves of these extensions would face the road. Although there are examples of extended dwellings with a mix of gable and hipped roof forms, no double fronted dwellings were observed during the site visit. However, because of the property's location on a corner plot and the variation in the design of the surrounding dwellings, the appeal scheme would not result in an incongruous form of development which would fail to respect the general character and appearance of this residential area.
8. As already noted, there are a variety of external materials present within the surrounding area. The proposed cedar cladding, render and concrete tiles would be sympathetic to these other dwellings and, although sited on a corner plot, would not result in the extended property being a particularly conspicuous form of development which would fail to assimilate into the prevailing character and appearance of the streetscene along Dale Lodge Road. Further, by reason of its modest scale, the proposed crown roof element would not be a particularly noticeable feature when viewed from the adjacent roads. The overall height of the resulting property would be similar to the surrounding 2-storey dwellings.
9. Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, in particular the streetscene, and, as such, it would not conflict with Policy QP3 of the Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 (LP) and Policy NP/DG2 of the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan. Amongst other matters, these policies require development to demonstrate that it would respect and not harm local character, including by reason of layout, rhythm, density, height, scale, bulk and materials.

Protected Species

10. As part of the appeal, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment has been submitted by the appellant which identifies that both the property and the surrounding area offer a value to bats. The Assessment also identifies that there is no firm evidence of bats being present at the property during the survey but there are potential opportunities for bat roosting to occur within its roof. Although it might be a low

value opportunity, the Assessment recommends that an emergence survey should be undertaken to rule out or confirm bat activity. In the absence of any recommended emergence survey information about the presence or not of this protected species and any associated level of activity, it is not possible to ascertain the likely impact, if any, on bats.

11. Having had regard to the duties under Regulations 9(1) and 9(3) of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended) (the Regulations) and the three tests in Article 16(1) of the *Habitat Directive*, there is no certainty that a licence would be issued by Natural England for the proposed development works which might affect bats. Therefore, and in the absence of being able to identify potential levels of bat activity and any necessary mitigation, it is not possible to be satisfied that the imposition of the condition suggested by the council would be appropriate in this case because there is no certainty that no adverse harm would be caused to a protected species.
12. In the absence of the required evidence, it is concluded that the proposed development could cause unacceptable harm to a protected species and, as such, there would be a conflict with LP Policy NR2 which refers to protected species and their habitats being safeguarded from harm or loss.

Conclusion

13. Although the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, in particular the streetscene, this matter is demonstrably outweighed by the unacceptable harm which could be caused to a protected species. Accordingly, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR