



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 January 2025 by N Manley BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/24/3356530

95 Hyde End Lane, Spencers Wood, Wokingham RG7 1ES

- 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 Darren and Laura Clayton against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 242085.
 - The development proposed is described as a “Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension with 3 roof lights, loft conversion with box dormer and roof light, and porch.”
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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 new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in December 2024. 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.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal property, 95 Hyde End Lane (no 95), is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling. From the street, its front and side elevations largely retain their original form. The attached semi-detached dwelling mirrors no 95 in design, featuring matching brick string embellishments and fenestration patterns, giving the semi-detached pair a symmetrical and cohesive appearance. At the rear, no 95 appears to have undergone a number of alterations and extensions.

6. Hyde End Lane lies within designated open countryside, characterised by a continuous row of houses on its eastern side and hedgerow-bordered fields to the west, providing the area with a rural feel. Many nearby homes share similarities with no 95, also being semi-detached properties of similar size, age, design and form. While the building line is somewhat staggered and some homes have been altered and extended, their original form, massing, and character remain recognisable, contributing to a consistent pattern of development.
7. The proposed side extension would more than double the total floorspace of the existing dwelling, with a width exceeding that of the current house. As a result, its scale, form and design would make it excessively wide and disproportionate to the host property, resulting in an incongruous addition to the area. While the appellants argue that the lower ridge height and front setback provide some subservience, these measures do not sufficiently mitigate the extension's overall impact. Consequently, it would overwhelm the host property, unbalance the semi-detached pair and disrupt the established pattern of development, harming both the character of no 95 and the wider area. Although the plot is wider than neighbouring properties, this alone does not justify such a disproportionate extension.
8. Furthermore, the proposed architectural elements would fail to respect the existing detailing of the property. While the eaves would remain largely consistent, the size, design, and positioning of the proposed fenestration would appear discordant with the existing window arrangements, failing to reflect the architectural character and fenestration patterns of both the host property and the wider area. Additionally, the proposed central porch would disrupt the symmetrical design of the semi-detached pair, introducing a discordant element to the dwellings. The appellants have asserted a planning condition could be imposed, requiring a brick string course to be introduced in the proposal. However, I do not consider this brick string course alone would be sufficient to mitigate the identified harm above.
9. The appellants cite extensions at 99 (no 99) and 107 Hyde End Lane (no 107) as precedents, noting that these properties, like no 95, occupy wider plots. Of the two, no 99 shares a similar form with the appeal property, while no 107 is of a later architectural style. I do not have the full details of these particular schemes or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration, and cannot therefore be certain that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. In any event, and whilst the extension at no 99 is set significantly further back than the current proposal, there is no doubt that these examples have resulted in the loss of the historic symmetry of the semi-detached properties, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
10. The appellants have also submitted a recent appeal decision (APP/X0360/W/22/3311543), asserting that it supports their case. However, based on the limited details provided, the cited development differs from the current proposal as it involves a change of use of land and the construction of a new building, and the site lies some distance away from the proposal before me. Furthermore, the Inspector in that case determined that the new building was neither excessive nor disproportionate in relation to the existing structure, whereas I have reached the opposite conclusion in this appeal. As a result, the circumstances are not directly comparable. Regardless, I have formed my own conclusions based on the evidence presented and my own observations.

11. With regards to the rear of the property, the proposed dormer would, due to its excessive width, extend across a significant part of the roof plane. The dormer would not be sufficiently set back from the sides of the roof, and would fail to relate to the design of the existing building, contrary to the guidance set out in the Council's Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012) (SPD). The harm caused by the proposed dormer would be evident from the street, by reason of the existing gap to the side of the appeal property.
12. No concerns were raised by the Council regarding the proposed single storey rear extension. Based on the evidence before me and my observations on site, I do not disagree with their conclusion.
13. However, for the above reasons, the overall development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. It would therefore conflict with Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2010) (WBLDP). Collectively, these policies seek to ensure that development proposals maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, are of an appropriate mass, layout and built form and do not result in an inappropriate increase in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
14. Additionally, it would also be contrary to the SPD and paragraph 135 of the Framework. Amongst other things, these require development to be clearly subservient to the form and scale of the original building and preserve the character of an area, ensuring development has regard to the style and form of buildings. Consequently, because it does not accord with the policies in the development plan, it also conflicts with Policy CC01 of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted 2014), which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
15. I have had regard to Policy CP19 of the WBLDP. However, this policy's overarching aim is to ensure the delivery of the South of the M4 Strategic Development Location. It is of little relevance to the appeal proposal, and I therefore do not find conflict with Policy CP19.

Other Matters

16. Concerns have been raised by interested parties about the development's impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, particularly regarding overlooking from the proposed dormer windows. However, the Council has not identified any issues in this regard. Based on the evidence provided and my site observations, I see no reason to disagree with their assessment and I am satisfied that the development would not cause undue overlooking of neighbouring properties.
17. The absence of harm in relation to other matters, such as according with some of the requirements of the SPD, the impact of harm to the light and outlook of neighbouring properties, highways and parking, amenity space, trees and landscaping and biodiversity are neutral matters which do not weigh in favour of the proposal.
18. I agree with the appellants' position that guidance point RD11 from the SPD does relate specifically to replacement buildings and is therefore not directly relevant to this proposal. However, as I have identified above, the proposal does conflict with other requirements of the SPD alongside other relevant development plan policies.

Conclusion and Recommendation

19. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Manley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

20. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR