



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2025

by **G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/25/3365946

Oak Trees, Comeragh Close, Woking, GU22 0LZ

- 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 and Mrs Peter and Elaine Majeed and Ong against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2024/0653.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a part two-storey, part single-storey side and rear extension, rear balcony, alterations to external materials and changes to fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on: -
 - i) the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area; and
 - ii) trees.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Oak Trees is a detached property located towards the end of a private road, which, together with the surrounding area, has a sylvan character. The properties along Comeragh Close vary in design and materials. They are, however, large, detached houses that generally have wide frontages and have been extended and/or remodelled.
4. The appeal property is a two-storey 1960s house with a relatively simple form and an attached garage to the side. The proposal would create a first-floor addition over the garage, featuring a gable projection to the rear, along with a single-storey extension which in part would form a balcony. The two-storey elements would be slightly set down from the main ridgeline and set back from the front elevation but are designed to integrate. The visual aesthetics of the existing building would be altered, including changes to the fenestration and new materials, to create a cohesive form and appearance.
5. The property is part of the Hook Heath Estate. This area has a strong Arcadian style, although Oak Trees does not exhibit this. It does nonetheless have a large

plot and is surrounded by trees, in line with the prevailing characteristics of low-density development and the verdant character of the area. Notably increasing the size of the property, the resultant scale of development can be accommodated within the plot and is not disproportionate to the other properties in the cul-de-sac.

6. The Council raise specific concerns about the hierarchy of the windows. Although I do not find the lack of uniformity to the rear façade to be significant, and the appellant explains that the existing different window sizes informed the contemporary design and are influenced by the internal layout. The elongated form of the property would be broken up by the glazed, full-height sections, which provide vertical features and a visual emphasis. In addition, the proposed timber canopy extending around the building, together with the cladding, provides definition and a unity to the resultant building as a whole.
7. Whilst the proposal would introduce a number of new materials and change the appearance, the existing building does not reflect the prevailing form of the estate and is of limited architectural merit. The immediate neighbours also vary in architectural form and treatment, and the appeal property is well-screened by trees. There is therefore scope for some individuality while being sympathetic to the local character, and details and/or further agreement on the specific materials, including colour, could be secured by condition.
8. In contrast to the Council, I therefore find that the design would result in a harmonious form, and I do not find that the scale of the extensions would be harmful to the existing property or the character of the area. Thus, there would be compliance with policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (WCS) and policy BE1 of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Plan (HHNP) in relation to the design and scale of the proposed extensions. Together, and amongst other things, these policies, along with the Design SPD, require developments to maintain or enhance the character of the area. They seek developments that are designed to a high quality and are attractive with their own distinct identity, and pay due regard to the scale, height, proportions, building lines, layout, materials and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land.

Trees

9. The application plans do show the position of the existing trees within the site and the proposed location of tree protection fencing. However, no specific details are provided regarding the arboricultural impact of the development, the category of the trees, or a method statement.
10. The extension closest to the mature trees along the northern boundary is a first-floor addition and therefore there would be no new foundations. However, from my observations, the increased height of the building may interfere with the canopy of the trees overhanging this area, which appears to include those in the neighbouring garden. Moreover, a tree preservation order protects all of the trees, and trees are an intrinsic part of, and significantly contribute to, the character of the area.
11. Whilst I acknowledge that in some instances further details can be secured by condition, in this case, there is insufficient arboricultural information to ensure that the mature trees would be safeguarded. Additionally, the details submitted pursuant to such a condition could potentially render the development unimplementable,

which would be unreasonable, and/or cause harm that was not identified as part of the planning balance.

12. The proposal therefore fails to accord with policies CS21 and CS24 of the WCS, policy DM2 of the Development Management Policies DPD (2016) and policy BE1 of the HHNP insofar as they relate to the landscape character which these policies seek to protect. In addition, they require the retention of mature trees, the provision of sufficient spacing, and that retained trees are adequately protected during construction.

Other Matters

13. The boundary of the Pond Road Conservation Area runs along the rear boundary of the appeal site and includes the properties at the other end of Comeragh Close. The Council found that the proposal would not impact the setting of the Conservation Area, and, given the nature and location of the proposed development, I have no reason to disagree.
14. Both the Council and Appellant note that there are discrepancies on the plans in relation to the extent of the proposed canopy. As such, there is a lack of certainty as to the exact details. However, this was not determinative to my or the Council's considerations of the overall design, and as the appeal is to be dismissed on other grounds, amended plans are not necessary.
15. The Council's handling of the application, including any delays or the potential opportunity for amendments, is outside the scope of this appeal, and I have assessed the scheme on the details before me.

Conclusion

16. I have found that the scale and design of the extension would be appropriate for the locality and would integrate with the host property. Nonetheless, due to the limited arboricultural information, I am unable to conclude that the proposed development would ensure the protection of the existing trees and, accordingly, maintain the verdant character of the area.
17. Therefore, for the reasons set out, the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR