

Item No	Application No. and Parish	8/13 Week Date	Proposal, Location and Applicant
(3)	18/01646/HOUSE Cold Ash	10 August 2018	Remove conservatory and replace with part 1 part 2 storey extension Oakville, Ashmore Green Road, Ashmore Green, Thatcham Mr and Mrs Mercer

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application click the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=18/01646/HOUSE>

Recommendation Summary: **The Head of Development and Planning be authorised to REFUSE planning permission.**

Ward Member(s): Councillor Garth Simpson

Reason for Committee determination: Requested by Ward Member

Committee Site Visit: 4 October 2018

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1. Site History

17/02935/HOUSE – Part one/part two storey rear extension REFUSED 20.12.2017
17/02824/HOUSE – Front Porch APPROVED 22.11.2017
17/01565/HOUSE – Two storey rear extension and new porch REFUSED 04.09.2017
07/00762/HOUSE – Conservatory APPROVED 24.05.07
155395 – Two storey side extension APPROVED 08.09.99

2. Publicity of Application

Site Notice Expired: 02.08.18

3. Consultations and Representations

Parish Council: No objections

Highways: No objections

Environmental Health No comments

Public Representations: Two letters of objection from neighbours to either side concerning increase in overlooking and loss of privacy to private amenity areas; loss of light and overshadowing to living room; overdevelopment of narrow plot, noise and disturbance; misleading photos of outlook; disruption by construction vehicles.

4. Policy Considerations

4.1 The statutory development plan includes the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS), the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007) (WBDLP), and the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026 (HSA DPD).

4.2 Other material considerations include government guidance, in particular:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

4.3 The following policies from the West Berkshire Core Strategy are relevant to this application:

- ADPP1: Spatial Strategy
- ADPP3: Thatcham
- CS13: Transport
- CS14: Design Principles
- CS19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character

4.4 The following policies from the HSA DPD are relevant to this application:

- P1: Residential Parking Standards

4.5 In addition, the following locally adopted policy documents are relevant to this application:

- Supplementary Planning Document, Quality Design (June 2006)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance, House Extensions (July 2004)

5. Description of Development

- 5.1. The application site is a detached house located within the settlement boundary of Ashmore Green. The original property has been extended at two storey level to the north side. In 2017 permission was refused on two occasions for applications proposing a two storey rear extension due to serious concerns relating to the detrimental impact on neighbouring properties. This application is a repeat of the latter, refused application which did not include the porch (approved under a separate application). The proposal is for a two storey and single storey extension to the rear of the property, replacing an existing conservatory. This will provide an enlarged dining area/garden room and kitchen with a new utility room and WC. The existing fourth bedroom at first floor level will be enlarged to create a master bedroom with a second en-suite and includes a large glazed window with full height doors with a Juliet style balcony.

6. Consideration of the Proposal

The main issues raised by this development are:

- 6.1. The principle of development
- 6.2. The design and impact on the character of the area
- 6.3. The impact on the living conditions of the neighbouring properties
- 6.4. The impact on highways and parking

6.1. The principle of development

- 6.1.1 The application site lies within the settlement boundary of Ashmore Green, a small village surrounded by open countryside, outside of but a short distance south of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Within settlement boundaries there are no development plan policies which specifically preclude or limit householder development, and so the principle of development is considered acceptable. The development plan does, however, include generally applicable policies relating to the design and impacts of all developments. According to Core Strategy Policy ADPP1, development in West Berkshire will follow the existing settlement pattern, and smaller villages with settlement boundaries, such as Ashmore Green, are suitable only for limited development subject to the character and form of the settlement.

6.2. The design and impact on the character of the area

- 6.2.1 According to the NPPF, good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy states that new development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. Policy CS19 seeks to ensure that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.
- 6.2.2 The application site and the associated street scene along this section of Ashmore Green Road consists of detached houses to the east side of the road, which are well set back within their respective plots with generous gardens which slope upwards to the rear. There is a fairly strong building line, although staggered, and many properties have been extended with various rear and side extensions and outbuildings. Nevertheless the properties are well spaced apart and this helps to contribute to the attractive rural character of this part of Ashmore Green where these properties benefit from having open fields to the east and west.

6.2.3 Oakville sits centrally within a large rectangular shaped plot and the house, as extended, together with the detached garage essentially fill the full width of the plot. The proposal will have a wider footprint than the conservatory but it will not be any deeper. The design is considered acceptable and in keeping with the host property. The proposal, together with previously approved extensions, results in a significant increase in the amount of built form on the site. However, due to its location and acceptable design, the proposal is, on balance, not considered to undermine local character, and therefore complies with the aforementioned policies.

6.3 The impact on the amenities of the neighbouring properties

6.3.1 With regard to the impact on neighbour amenity, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) seeks all development to have a positive impact on quality of life in the district. Conversely, developments that have a negative impact on quality of life would not accord with the policy. In terms of house extensions and their impact on amenity, SPG 04/2: House Extensions, identifies loss of light (natural and direct), overshadowing, overbearing and loss of privacy as the issues of primary concern. It is considered that the primary impact of the development would be to 'Underhill' to the north.

6.3.2 The revised proposal for the two storey extension extends to the same depth as the conservatory and has been set down from the existing ridge height. A large area of glazing at first floor level is proposed within the gable end which serves a master bedroom. Although a bedroom window currently exists at first floor level, the proposal will bring this significantly closer towards the private amenity area to the rear of the neighbouring property 'Underhill' to the north. This property is already set back from the front of 'Oakville' and given that it is at a slightly higher ground level, the proximity of the proposed extension and therefore bedroom window is considered to result in an unacceptable level of overlooking and perceived intrusion on the patio area to the immediate rear of 'Underhill'. It is not considered that any form of fencing or planting will sufficiently mitigate the harm, and the enjoyment of this space would be significantly reduced, causing unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers.

6.3.3 Potential overlooking toward the rear of 'Mulsanne' to the south is considered less intrusive; however given the gradient of the gardens the proposed bedroom window will result in an increase in potential or perceived overlooking.

6.3.4 In terms of loss of light and overshadowing, owing to its size and location, the proposed two storey extension would have a significant impact on the amount of natural light entering the living room of 'Underhill'. Although a dual aspect room, the affected window is on the south side of the property and the amount of light currently enjoyed by the occupants would be reduced.

6.3.5 The comments regarding noise and disturbance from interested parties are noted. The Council cannot resist development on the basis of short-term construction noise, but a condition restricting working hours is appropriate to minimise adverse impacts. There is a large parking area to the front of the application site for construction vehicles.

6.3.6 Overall, it is concluded that the proposed development would demonstrably harm the living conditions of neighbours, and therefore the application conflicts with the aforementioned policies.

6.4 The impact on highways and parking

6.4.1 There is sufficient off road parking and there are no objections from the Highways Authority.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 7.1 The increase in internal floor space of the proposed house extension is less than 100 square metres. Under the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule adopted by West Berkshire Council and the government Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, house extensions of less than 100 square metres are not liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Having taken account of all relevant policy considerations and the material considerations referred to above, it is considered that there are clear reasons why the development proposed is unacceptable as it results in a poor form of development which fails to maintain an acceptable level of amenity for existing neighbours and would be contrary to design principles set out in the SPG for House Extensions and Core Strategy Policy CS14, along with advice contained within the NPPF

9. Full Recommendation

- 9.1 The Head of Development and Planning be authorised to **REFUSE** planning permission for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed two storey extension would bring an existing bedroom window at first floor level within closer proximity to the private amenity area to the immediate rear of the neighbouring property 'Underhill'. The rear elevation would be largely glazed at first floor level, increasing the opportunities for actual overlooking and resulting in a greater sense of perceived overlooking for the neighbouring property. This would result in an unacceptable level of overlooking to the detriment of the amenities of current and future occupiers of 'Underhill'. The proposal therefore fails to secure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of neighbouring properties as required in the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14, of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), the Quality Design West Berkshire SPD (Part 2: Residential Development), and the House Extensions SPG.

2. The proposed two storey extension, by virtue of its relationship with the adjacent property 'Underhill' to the north, represents an overly dominant form of development that would be harmful to the residential amenities resulting in an unacceptable level of overshadowing and specifically loss of light to the living room of this neighbouring property. The proposal therefore fails to secure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of neighbouring properties as required in the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, which seeks to ensure that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design. In addition the proposed extension would run contrary to Supplementary Planning Guidance 'House Extensions' Part 5 - The Effect on Neighbours.

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