

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|------------------|------------------------|
| HAMSTEAD MARSHALL 18/02648/HOUSE Pins Ref 3223227 | 9 Salters Hamstead Marshall Newbury Berkshire RG20 0HH | Proposed two storey side and rear extension. Demolish garage and summer house and erect new detached timber frame garage with home office above. | Dele. Refusal | Dismissed 30.4.2019 |
|--|--|--|------------------|------------------------|

Main issue

The Inspector considered that the main issue in this case is its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

No. 9 Salters is one of a pair of semi-detached houses located in a prominent position above the road with the majority of their garden area to the front and sides. They are constructed of brick with plain clay tiles and half-hipped roofs. Their front elevations appear little altered from the original and maintain the original symmetry.

No. 9 has a detached garage and detached summer house to the east side and a rear single storey extension. No. 10, the adjoining property, has a detached double garage to the west side and a two storey rear extension.

The pair of semis is part of a small scattered group of houses in an area which is predominantly rural in character. Although the immediate surroundings of the site are outside the nearby North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the area has many of the characteristics of the AONB, namely undulating terrain and open agricultural fields interspersed with woodland.

The relevant policies in this case include CS14, CS17 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), adopted 2012, (the Core Strategy) and C3 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2017 (the DPD).

Core Strategy policy CS14 requires new development to be of a high quality design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. CS19 seeks to ensure that the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District are conserved and enhanced. DPD policy C3 requires the design of new housing, including extensions, to have regard to the impact on the landscape character of the area. Core Strategy policy CS17 seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity assets and to protect habitats which support protected species.

The Council has referred to DPD policy C6, but this relates to affordable housing and is not relevant in this case.

Character and appearance

The Inspector considered that the height and width of the proposed two storey side extension would appear out of scale with the proportions of the existing house. The design and materials would reflect the existing form and appearance of the houses. However, notwithstanding the small set back from the front and down from the main ridge, the extension would appear prominent in relation to the existing house and would unbalance the overall symmetry of the pair.

This would have an unacceptable, adverse impact on the character and appearance of this attractive rural area, particularly as the property occupies a prominent position above the road and is readily visible from public viewpoints.

The Inspector saw during his visit that No. 10 has a two storey rear extension which has no impact on the appearance of the properties from the front and he considered that that part of the rear element of the proposal directly behind No. 9 would have less impact on the appearance of the house although it would be visible in oblique views from the southeast.

No. 9 is a modestly sized two bedroom dwelling and he considered that, even taking account of the limited land available at the rear, it is capable of extension to provide additional accommodation. However, he was not persuaded that this proposal is an appropriate solution.

The Inspector concluded that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to policies CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy and C3 of the DPD.

Biodiversity

The age and location of the property are such that there is some possibility that bats may be present. Core Strategy policy CS17 requires that potential habitats should be conserved and enhanced. The appellant has not demonstrated that there are no protected species on the site which would be adversely affected by the proposal. However, the Inspector considered that this matter could be resolved by the imposition of a suitable condition requiring a survey of the habitat were planning permission to be granted.

In the absence at this time of a survey, he concluded that the proposal would not conserve biodiversity, contrary to policy Core Strategy CS17.

Other matters

Neighbouring residents at Hillcrest have expressed concern regarding the potential for overlooking, loss of light and the overbearing effect of the proposal on their property. The Inspector considered that there would be adequate separation between the rooflights and ground floor windows of the proposed extension and Hillcrest to maintain privacy in accordance with the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document *04/2 House Extensions*.

The original proposal has been amended to reduce the height of the proposed garage and remove its first floor. It would be a more substantial building than the existing garage and would be closer to the northeast boundary. However, it would replace both the existing garage and the summerhouse and, in his view, would be acceptable in this context. Although Hillcrest is at a lower level, the garage would be screened from the house by an existing dense hedge.

For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

DC