

HAMPSTEAD NORREYS 13/02605 Pins Ref 2213507	Myrtle Cottage, Scottalls Lane, Hampstead Norreys Mr C Baker	Single storey extension	Delegated Refusal	Dismissed 26.3.14
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Procedural Matter

The Inspector took into account the Government's Planning Practice Guidance, issued on 6 March 2014, in reaching his decision.

Main Issues

The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings, having particular regard to the location of the site within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and on the living conditions of the occupiers of Rose Cottage and Scottalls End, with particular reference to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

The appeal site is located at the end of Scottalls Lane on the edge of the village of Hampstead Norreys. The site and the other plots accessed off the lane consist of detached dwellings located in spacious grounds. The appeal property is separated from Scottalls Lane by a high fence along its front boundary. A footpath runs past the front of the site and into the fields situated to the east of it.

The proposed extension, whilst only being single storey, would be approximately 6.7 metres wide and it would project forward of the host dwelling. The Inspector accepted the principle of an extension at the site is acceptable. Furthermore, he noted the appellant's comments in respect of the design of the extension, the way it would relate to the host building and the materials proposed. However, given the size of the footprint of the proposed extension it would dominate the host building. The width of the extension and the way in which it would project forward of the host dwelling would have a particularly negative effect as consequently the extension would fail to relate to or respect the host dwelling. In addition the blank front elevation to the proposed extension would appear stark and would detract from the attractive front elevation of the host dwelling.

He accepted that the proposal would not be particularly visible from Scottalls Lane and there would be limited wider views of the proposal from the surrounding area including the footpath that runs into the fields to the east of the site. Furthermore, he noted the appellant's point regarding the overall percentage of the site that would be developed as a result of the proposal. Nevertheless, the fact that there would be limited views of the proposal, and the vast majority of the appeal site would remain undeveloped, is no basis for allowing inappropriate development that would have a harmful impact on character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings.

In addition to the above, the Inspector noted the appellant's comments in respect of what the West Berkshire Council House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) says about larger front extensions. However, he did not consider this to be relevant as what is proposed is a side extension. With regards to side extensions the SPG states that it is usually recommended that side extensions are set back from the main building by at least one metre.

For these reasons the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings, having particular regard to the location of the site within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As a result there would be a conflict with Area Delivery Plan Policy 5, policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) (CS), the SPG, the Quality Design – West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Given the nature of the proposal and the location of the appeal site within the settlement boundary he did not consider that the proposal would be contrary to Area Delivery Plan Policy 1 of the CS.

Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 and policies CS14 and CS19 of the CS set out, amongst other things, the need for new development to be of a high quality design which conserves and enhances local distinctiveness and respects the character and appearance of an area, including the landscape character of an area. Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 emphasises this point in relation to sites located in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The SPG and SPD reiterate similar aims with particular regard to residential extensions. Paragraph 17 of the Framework states that planning should take account of the character of different areas.

Living conditions

The closest dwellings to the appeal site are Rose Cottage located to its west and Scottalls End, situated to its south, on the opposite side of Scottalls Lane. The appeal site is separated from Rose Cottage by a close boarded fence whilst trees and vegetation also exist along the boundary. A close boarded fence, with trees and vegetation located behind it, also exists along the front boundary of the appeal site, opposite Scottalls End.

The Inspector accepted that the proposal would bring the living accommodation at the appeal site closer to the boundaries of these dwellings. However, the proposed development would only be single storey and there is existing fencing, trees and vegetation along the southern and western boundaries of the appeal site. Consequently, and given the distance that would remain to these buildings, he was satisfied that the extension would not have a significant overbearing impact on the occupiers of either dwelling.

For these reasons the proposed development would not unacceptably harm the living conditions of the occupiers of Rose Cottage or Scottalls End, with particular reference to outlook. As a result there would be no conflict with, Policy CS14 of the CS, the SPG, the SPD or the Framework. Policy CS14 sets out, amongst other things, the importance of new development making a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire whilst the SPG and SPD set out the importance of ensuring that new development has regard to the outlook from neighbouring properties. Paragraph 17 of the Framework states that planning should always seek a good standard of amenity for existing occupants of buildings. However, this does not outweigh the harm that he identified above.

Other Matters

The appeal site is located in the Hampstead Norreys Conservation Area. The Council has not expressed any explicit concerns in relation to the impact of the proposal on the Conservation Area. However, the Inspector had regard to the statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. For the reasons set out above the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This would compound the harm that would result from the proposed development.

The Inspector noted the appellant's comments in respect of the outbuilding on the appeal site and the proposed two storey extension previously granted planning permission at the site. In addition, he noted his comments with regard to the four dwellings granted planning permission on the northern edge of the village, on the east side of Water Street. Whilst the Inspector understood the appellant's points each proposal should be treated on its own merits. It is on this basis that the Inspector had considered the proposed development.

Finally, the Inspector had regard to the personal circumstances of the appellant and his family and their need for additional space. However, the need for additional space does not outweigh the harm that he identified to the character and appearance of the area, and so a dismissal of the appeal is a proportionate response.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the Inspector concluded that the appeal should be dismissed. DC