

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2016

by J A B Gresty MA MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 22 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/16/3153385

20 Halfhides, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1LE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Claudia Thompson against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/EPF/2021/15, dated 13 August 2015, was refused by notice dated 5 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is a double storey side and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a double storey side and single storey rear extension at 20 Halfhides, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1LE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/EPF/2021/15, dated 13 August 2015, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development shall match those of the existing dwelling.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Double storey side and single storey rear extension scales 1:50 & 1:100, Existing plans and elevations scales 1:50 & 1:100, Street scene scale 1:100 and Site plan.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

4. Halfhides is a residential cul-de-sac characterised by semi-detached houses, of similar original design, set back from the road behind good sized front gardens. Most of the pairs of two-storey houses have single-storey garages to their sides which results in there being distinctive open gaps between the two-storey houses at first floor level. These gaps contribute towards the cul-de-sac having a generally spacious, planned character and appearance.
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5. The appeal property is a detached, two-storey house situated at the end of the cul-de-sac. The appeal proposal includes construction of a two-storey side extension which in part would be built on the site of an existing single-storey, flat-roofed garage. The extension would have a hipped roof which would complement the roof of the main body of the existing house. The front elevation of the extension would be stepped back from the front of the main house which would provide visual interest and help to limit the visual bulk of the extended property when viewed from the front. The walls would be clad with render which would be similar to the side and back walls of the house. In these respects the design of the proposed side extension would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the host property and would meet with the aims of good design sought by saved Policies CP2 and DBE10 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan and Alterations (LP).
6. Similar to most other properties on the cul-de-sac, the appeal property and the neighbouring property at No 19 have single storey garages next to them with open space between the properties at first floor level. The side extension would reduce this space by half and would not reflect the pattern of development on the cul-de-sac. However, the four houses at the end of the cul-de-sac, two detached and a pair of semi-detached, stand at right angles to the main body of the cul-de-sac and visually do not relate strongly with the prevailing pattern of development on the cul-de-sac. Consequently the loss of openness between the appeal property and No 19 would have limited effect on the prevailing character and appearance of the cul-de-sac as a whole.
7. Further, No 17 has a two-storey side extension which occupies the space to the side of it, similar to the layout proposed at No 20. Whilst this does not reflect the pattern of development on the main body of the cul-de-sac, there remains open space above No 18's garage and this part of the cul-de-sac retains a generally planned and spacious character and appearance. The proposed side extension at No 20 would have a similar effect on the openness between the properties and, in conjunction with the side extension at No 17, it would result in a degree of symmetry of the four properties at the end of the cul-de-sac.
8. On balance, as a consequence of its position at right angles to the main part of the cul-de-sac, I conclude that the reduction in open space at first floor level to the side of the appeal property would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the cul-de-sac. Further, the improvement in symmetry of the four properties at the end of the cul-de-sac would give this part of Halfhides a more balanced appearance in the street scene. In these respects the proposed development would accord with LP Policies CP2 and DBE10.
9. The second main element of the appeal proposal is a single-storey rear extension. The extension would have a mono-pitch roof and would be subservient to the host building in size and appearance. Accordingly the extension would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the host property and would accord with LP Policies CP2 and DBE10.

Other Matters

10. The two-storey side extension at No 17 was built without planning permission. However, due to its age, the Council considers that it is immune to enforcement action. Whilst this does not weigh in favour of the development at No 17 as a

comparison to the proposed development at No 20, in practice it does not affect the appearance of No 17 which is an established feature of the street scene and which I find to be in keeping with the local area. Therefore, in this case I attach limited weight to the planning history of No 17's side extension.

11. The Council expresses concern that if a similar two-storey side extensions were to be built at either No 18 or 19, a terracing affect would result to the detriment of the street scene. However, no evidence has been provided to indicate that this is likely and each case should be considered on its own merits. For the reasons indicated by the Council, the effect of a two-storey side extension at either No 18 or 19 on the character and appearance of the cul-de-sac would not be the same as that of the appeal proposal. Therefore, I consider these concerns do not weigh heavily against the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

12. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and housing applications should be considered in the context of this presumption in favour of sustainable development. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Whilst the proposed side extension would result in a reduction in the amount of visible open space between No 20 and 19, contrary to the predominant pattern of development on the main body of Halfhides, significant space would be retained above No 19's single-storey garage and the development would result in a degree of symmetry of layout of the four dwellings at the end of the cul-de-sac. The design of the proposed rear and side extensions would be subservient to the host building and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the host property. Therefore, on balance and for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed extensions would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area and that they would represent sustainable development as sought by the Framework. Accordingly, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

13. In order to protect the character and appearance of the local area, I impose a condition requiring the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development to match those used in the existing building.
14. In order to provide certainty, I impose a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. As the plans are not numbered or dated and I refer to their descriptive titles in the decision above.

J A B Gresty

INSPECTOR