
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2016

by Richard Aston BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/16/3157097

13 Ridgewood Gardens, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 3NN

- 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 Mrs Caroline Holford against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/16/0902, dated 21 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing single storey rear extension and construction of two storey rear extension, demolition of existing single storey front addition and construction of two storey front extension and minor internal reconfiguration works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of existing single storey rear extension and construction of two storey rear extension, demolition of existing single storey front addition and construction of two storey front extension and minor internal reconfiguration works at 13 Ridgewood Gardens, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 3NN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/16/0902, dated 21 March 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: 06-2015-RWG-01a, 06-2015-RWG-02, 03-2016-RWG-04b, 06-2015-RWG-05, 03-2016-RWG-06, 03-2016-RWG-03d and 06-2015-RWG-07.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development used by the Council in their decision is different to both the application and appeal form. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed and I have therefore used the one originally given.
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Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached two storey dwelling, located in a cul-de-sac of similar properties. Due to the topography of the land it sits somewhat higher than surrounding properties and is visible on the approach toward the turning head in front of the property. There are gaps between the properties at single and first floor level, which, although limited in width, provide views of trees and landscaping to the rear and side of the properties.
5. On the evidence before me, the Council raise no objection to the two storey rear and first floor front element or to a number of minor external alterations. Having visited the site, I have no reason to disagree and furthermore, the two storey front element would be a very similar form of development to one which was approved by the Council in 2004 in accordance with the same development plan policies, albeit that the permission would appear to no longer be extant.
6. The Council's main concern appears to be the alteration to the relationship with the existing detached garage at ground floor level. The introduction of a pitched roof above the existing walkway would add to the bulk of built form on the front elevation but when viewed within the cul-de-sac it would be seen in association with a number of existing roof slopes of varying heights and the use of sympathetic materials would reflect the appearance of the host property, which could be secured by condition.
7. Moreover, a separation distance would be retained at first floor level which would still allow a view of the mature hedgerow along the side boundary. Consequently, I do not share the Council's contention that views through the site would be materially harmed. Whilst there would be some visual imbalance with the roof of the existing garage building, it would not be overly prominent or visually discordant and in my view, it would result in an appropriate standard of design.
8. For these reasons, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host property and area and would not conflict with Policies 69 and 72 of the St Alban's District Local Plan Review 1994 ('LP'). Amongst other things, these seek to ensure an extension relates to the domestic scale, character and appearance of the street, is of a high standard of design and is compatible with the original building. Although the LP pre-dates the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') and is of some vintage, I find these policies are consistent with it. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with the design objectives of the Framework.

Conditions

9. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council and have amended the wording where necessary in the interests of clarity and simplicity. A condition is required to ensure compliance with the approved plans as this provides clarity. Furthermore, a condition that external materials match the existing building is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the host property and area.

10. The Council have requested a condition relating to the two windows that would be created to serve the first floor en-suite bathrooms in the elevation facing No. 20a Roundwood Drive. However, these are clearly shown as being obscurely glazed on the plans and given the requirements of condition 2 I have not therefore imposed it.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would not conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole or the Framework. Having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Richard Aston

INSPECTOR