

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2016

by Philip Major BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/16/3158770

6 Meadow Walk, Great Abington, Cambridge CB21 6AZ.

- 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 Mr Jacob Sturdy against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: S/0977/16/FL, dated 12 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension over part of the existing dwelling and part single part two storey extension.
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Preliminary Matters

1. The development description above is taken from the Council's decision notice. It accurately describes the proposal notwithstanding that the Appellant has referred to part of the proposal as an extension above an intended ground floor extension following permitted development tolerances. As that permitted development extension does not exist I prefer the Council's description.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is situated in a short cul-de-sac of dwellings of varying design. Most are of reasonably recent construction (latter part of the 20th century) but the house to the south is new and of different style. However, the majority of houses in the street are characterised by relatively low pitched roofs which gives them a somewhat squat form even though a number have rooms in the roof. There are few, if any, dormer windows other than in the new house adjacent, and that is part of its permitted design.
 5. The appeal proposal would significantly change the character of the existing dwelling by changing it to an overtly 2 storey house over much of its area, with dormer windows set into the roof slope. I acknowledge that the house is currently low in comparison with others nearby, and do not suggest that there
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- would be no scope for its alteration. But I do not accept that the scheme before me satisfactorily addresses the surroundings.
6. There are 2 particular concerns with the design submitted. The first relates to the front (northern) roof slope of the dwelling which is most clearly visible on the approach to the property. Here both eaves and ridge would be raised and dormers would be inserted which would break the eaves line. This would result in a design which bears little in common with the almost universal unity of style seen within the street. The dormers would not be evenly spaced, but in 2 banks, and downpipes between and at each end of the extension (5 in total) would be unattractive and jarring features. The extension of the dormers into the roof slope (which is not shown on the side elevation drawing sent to me) would lead to a perception that this part of the house was 'top heavy'. The loss of the garage door would not be adequate mitigation for the harmful impact.
 7. The second concern relates to the rear extension roof (irrespective of whether it would be above a permitted development ground floor extension). This would include a wide and very low pitched gable facing south, with windows almost touching the shallow rake at each end leading to a weak appearance. This gable would be visible across the neighbouring garden and would be an incongruous and jarring visual feature. Some filtering by vegetation would soften the impact but it would still be a harmful visual intrusion lacking sympathy with existing development
 8. Taking the above concerns in the round I agree with the Council that the proposed development would be out of proportion with the existing dwelling, and would substantially increase its bulk and prominence. In my judgement the scheme would result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. I note that the Appellant suggests that an alternative design might be considered appropriate, but I must make my determination on the scheme refused by the Council.
 9. The development plan includes the South Cambridgeshire District Council Development Control Policies Development Plan Document of 2007. Policy DP/2, amongst other things, requires new development to be of high quality design, to preserve or enhance the character of the local area, to respond to the local context and to be appropriate with the scale, mass and form of the surrounding area. This policy accords with the advice of the National Planning Policy Framework that new development should be of good design. For the reasons set out above I do not consider that the proposal meets the terms of Policy DP/2 and is in conflict with it.
 10. My overall conclusion, therefore, is that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Major

INSPECTOR