
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2016

by Gareth W Thomas BSc(Hons) MSc(Dist) PGDip MRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/16/3157971

1 Bowers Way, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4EP

- 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 N Ferrier against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/16/1665, dated 24 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is for first floor front and side extension, window and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for first floor front and side extension, window and internal alterations at 1 Bowers Way, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4EP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/16/1665, dated 24 May 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: MMFF/BW/1; MMF/BW/10/ RevE; Block Plan; and Site Location Plan.
 - 3) The materials used in the proposed extension shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposed extension would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Harpenden Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is within the Harpenden Conservation Area (CA) and I have had regard to the fact that Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected in the St Albans District Local Plan (LP)
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- Policy 85. In addition, the appeal property is a locally designated heritage asset, which is also given importance by reason of LP Policy 87.
4. No.1 Bowers Close is a large detached two storey house built in the style of the art and craft movement within an area of similarly large individually designed houses set within substantial plots. Due to the presence of mature trees on the western side of the plot, the property has been built in close proximity to the existing private lane which runs along its eastern boundary and which separates No.1 from its closest neighbour. Looking from the front, the eastern side elevation comprises a cat slide extension that helps reduce the massing of the property as it presents itself to the lane.
 5. The house is described as a locally listed building although little detail is provided in terms of the characteristics that the Council considers valuable. That said, it is an attractive property and LP Policy 87 explains that planning permission will not be granted for alterations and extensions to such heritage assets unless features of architectural or historic interest are preserved. LP Policy 69 requires a high standard of design and sets out matters to be addressed, including context, materials as well as other policies to be taken into account. LP Policy 72 relating to extensions and amongst other things, requires that the architectural style, roof form, windows, detailing and materials should be appropriate to the original building, especially within conservation areas.
 6. I have been provided with limited information concerning the character of the CA; however, from my site visit, it is evident that this part of the CA comprises many large properties combining to form an attractive early twentieth century vernacular revival incorporating decorative features and set in leafy and large plots. Further afield within this large CA, there are numerous examples of public buildings set in extensive grounds. The Common comprises a significant feature and open space. The significance of the CA in part is derived from its open spaces, its strong townscape character but throughout a feeling that buildings are set within the landscape.
 7. The proposal would see the removal of the attractive cat slide extension to the side and its replacement by a two storey extension that would wrap around the rear elevation to form a 'L' shaped extension. The design incorporates recesses to assist in reducing the overall bulk of the extension, which would help in reducing the overall scale thus making it a subservient addition to the host property. This is a requirement of the Council's guidance set in its Design Guide – Extensions in Residential Areas. Thus, coupled with the style of development proposed in terms of roofing design and window treatment. I am satisfied that the extension would at least preserve the character of the CA and its significance that I have identified above. It would also preserve the character and therefore not harm the locally listed building.
 8. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with LP Policies 69, 72, 85 and 87 as well as the design Guide as described above. It would also be in compliance with section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions

9. The parties have not suggested conditions. Having regard to the Planning Practice Guidance I intend to attach conditions relating to commencement of development and specifying plans in the interests of certainty. I attach a

condition requiring matching materials to be used in the extension in the interests of character and appearance.

Conclusions

10. Having regard to the above reasons and all other matters that have been raised in this appeal, I conclude that planning permission should be granted and thus this appeal is allowed.

Gareth W Thomas

INSPECTOR