
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 February 2017

by J L Cheesley BA(Hons) DIPTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 8th February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/16/3165290

17 Apsley Close, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 3PX

- 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 David Allan against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/16/2219/HH was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is a side two-storey extension and rear single-storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission granted for a side two-storey extension and rear single-storey extension at 17 Apsley Close, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 3PX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/16/2219/HH, dated 28 September 2016, 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 hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 4071.P.001, 4071.P.002, 4071.P.003, 4071.P.004, 4071.P.005, and 4071.P.006.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding streetscene.

Reasons

3. Saved Policy ENV1 in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review (2007) seeks to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design to reflect local distinctiveness. This includes complementing the existing grain of development.
 4. Saved Local Plan Policy ENV5 allows extensions to dwellings in Bishop's Stortford provided that the character, appearance, and amenities of the
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- dwelling and any adjoining dwellings would not be significantly affected to their detriment.
5. Saved Local Plan Policy ENV6 seeks to safeguard the character and appearance of the streetscene and prevent residential extensions creating a visually damaging terracing effect by applying a general rule of a 1 metre gap at first floor level.
 6. The policies referred to above are broadly in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework as far as they meet the Framework's core principles; particularly that planning should be taking account of the different roles and character of an area and should be seeking to ensure high quality design.
 7. The appeal site lies within a primarily residential area comprising predominately semi-detached two-storey dwellings. Many of the dwellings have been extended close to the side boundaries, creating a strong terracing effect. I consider this terracing effect is the overriding characteristic of the streetscene in Apsley Close.
 8. The proposal includes a two-storey side extension which would leave a small gap, some 0.1 metres in width, to the side boundary. This would clearly not be in accordance with the general rule of a 1 metre gap at first floor level. It would be set back from the front elevation and set down from the main roof ridge. In my opinion, this would appear as a subservient addition. Due to the small side gap, I consider that the proposed side extension would emphasise the existing terracing effect of other side extensions in the streetscene.
 9. Whilst the proposal would add to the existing terracing effect created by other side extensions on neighbouring properties, I do not consider that this would be visually damaging as it would be in keeping with the overriding character and appearance of this area.
 10. I have determined the appeal before me in accordance with the development plan. The Framework advises that proposed developments that conflict with the development plan should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. In this particular instance, the material considerations I have identified above indicate that whilst the proposal would not accord with the general rule of a 1 metre gap at first floor level specified in Local Plan Policy ENV6, the existing character and appearance of the streetscene would be safeguarded in accordance with the objective in this policy.
 11. The proposal includes a single-storey rear extension. The Council has not raised concern regarding the rear extension. From my observations; this would be a discrete addition, in keeping with the prevailing character and appearance of the rear garden environment.
 12. For the above reasons and having taken into consideration all matters raised, I conclude that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding streetscene. Thus, the proposal would be in accordance with saved Local Plan Policies ENV1, ENV5 and ENV6.
 13. The Council has suggested standard time, materials and plans conditions. I consider such conditions to be reasonable and necessary.

J L Cheesley INSPECTOR