

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2017

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20th February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/16/3164771
14 Carpenders Close, Harpenden, AL5 3HN

- 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 Juan Monti against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/16/2423, dated 2 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey front extension, part garage conversion, single storey rear extension, internal alterations, side lean to roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to a two storey front extension, part garage conversion, and associated internal alterations. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to a single storey rear extension and side lean to roof, and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension and side lean to roof at 14 Carpenders Close, Harpenden, AL5 3HN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/16/2423, dated 2 August 2016, and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted, and 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: MMJM/CC/1 Rev A; MMJM/CC/6 Rev A; Existing OS Map Scale 1:1250 / Proposed Block Plan scale 1:500.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of both the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a link detached property on the eastern side of Carpenders Close. The dwelling is part of a row of properties of similar design, which have single storey flat roof garages located to the front. The building line is staggered in part, which follows the curve of the road.
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4. The Council do not raise any objection to the proposed single storey rear extension or side lean to roof. With regards to the rear extension, the Council state that this is of an appropriate size and in keeping with the scale and character of the property. Moreover, no objection has been made by any interested party in relation to these elements of the scheme. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I conclude that the single storey rear extension and side lean to roof would not significantly harm the character and appearance of either the host property or the surrounding area.
5. The development would also introduce a 2 storey front extension above and to the side of the existing garage. This would significantly alter the appearance of the dwelling, and would bring it closer to the road at first floor level. The front extension would dominate the front of the property, and would have an awkward, bulky appearance. In narrowing the gap to No 16 at first floor level, it would also appear visually cramped. Due to its position, it would be a prominent feature that would be out of keeping within other properties in the row.
6. The building line in this location is staggered, and the extension would be partly located behind No 16. However, a significant proportion of it would project beyond No 16 and it would be visible along the street.
7. My attention has been drawn to a front extension to No 28 Carpenders Close. However, the design of that extension is more sympathetic to the host property, and I further note that No 28 is a detached rather than a link detached property. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
8. Whilst the proposed increase in volume would not be large, that does not alter my view regarding the harm I have identified above. Similarly, the use of matching materials, windows, roof form, and detailing does not overcome the harm that would arise in this case.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the two storey front extension and part garage conversion would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of both the host property and the surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies 69 and 72 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review (1994). These policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that residential extensions are compatible with the original building and relate well to adjoining properties. It would also be at odds with the Framework, which seeks to ensure good design.

Other Matter

10. It is acknowledged that the development would not significantly harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, and that it would be served by adequate parking. However, this represents an absence of harm in relation to these matters rather than a positive benefit.
11. Whilst the occupiers of the adjacent properties did not object to the extension, objections were received from another local resident and also from Harpenden Town Council.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed in part and dismissed in part.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR