



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 January 2017

by **Peter D Biggers** BSc Hons MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E2734/D/16/3162308

1 Goosemoor Cottages, War Field Lane, Cowthorpe LS22 5EU

- 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 James Scott against the decision of Harrogate Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6.124.154.C.FUL, dated 18 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey extension to front of dwelling and single storey extension to the rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed in respect of the front extension.
2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey extension to the rear at 1 Goosemoor Cottages, Warfield Lane, Cowthorpe LS22 5EU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 6.124.154.C.FUL, dated 18 July 2016 and the plans and documents 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 be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted: (00)001; (00)002; (00)003; (00)004; (00)005(Revision D); (00)006; (00)008.
 - 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.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and on the surrounding countryside in War Field Lane.

Reasons

4. 1 Goosemoor Cottages is one of a pair of semi-detached 2 storey cottages in brick and slate located on the south-west side of War Field Lane. The narrow single track lane heads south east-out of Cowthorpe into open countryside and is lined with hedges and trees in the vicinity of the appeal site. The lane has sporadic development along it and is entirely rural in character. Both 1 and 2 Goosemoor cottages have been significantly extended in the past with 2 storey side extensions
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and rear extensions. The proposal would replace the rear extension to No 1 but would add a further large 2 storey extension to the frontage.

5. Policy SG4 of the *Harrogate Core Strategy* (HCS) requires all development to be well integrated with and complementary to neighbouring buildings and spatial qualities of the area and to be appropriate to the form and character of the settlement and/or landscape character. Policy H15 of the *Harrogate Local Plan* (HLP) permits extensions to dwellings provided certain criteria are met, including that there would be no detriment to the character or appearance of the dwelling or the surrounding area. In order to give additional guidance the Council produced the *Harrogate House Extensions and Garages Design Guide* (HEGDG). The policies and guidance together set out the criteria to ensure the design of extensions would not have an adverse impact on character and appearance.
6. The appeal proposal would constitute a further round of significant extensions to this semi-detached property. The HEGDG advises that buildings should not be subjected to continuous incremental growth and that it will rarely be acceptable to extend onto an existing extension or link extensions which would then subsume the original building. This would be the effect of the proposal.
7. The front extension would be built almost entirely off the earlier side extension extending out in 2 two storey gables with differing roof designs almost to the line of the original front gable offshoot. The resulting form, scale and mass of the extension would not be subservient, as it would dominate the frontage and would subsume the character and appearance of the original cottage. I acknowledge that the HEGDG, although normally not encouraging front extensions, does allow that in certain cases front extensions may be permissible where there is no regular building line and it suits the building style. It gives the example that where there is an existing offshoot to the front there may be the potential for a front extension to reflect this but that is not what is proposed here where two thirds of the frontage would be extended forward. The outcome would be an extension that would be contrary to the original form and appearance of the cottages. I acknowledge that over time semi-detached properties may diverge slightly in their appearance but in this case the scale and mass of extension added to the east end of this pair of cottages would be unacceptable.
8. It has been put to me that, because the cottages are set back from the lane, not part of a streetscene and are well screened, the front extension to No 1 would not be seen and would therefore be acceptable. I noted on my site inspection that there is indeed substantial planting on the frontage such that, when approaching from Cowthorpe, the property is largely screened. However War Field Lane, heading south-east away from the property, rises up to Goosemoor Farm and views back towards Goosemoor Cottages are open from this more elevated position. Although there are hedges and some tree cover, at the time of my visit and throughout the winter when trees are bare, No 1 and its dominant front extension would be clearly visible to those on the road. From this viewpoint the mass of the front extension would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surroundings.
9. I have been referred to the changes in permitted development rights enlarging what is possible as permitted development and which the appellant argues indicates the Government's intention towards a more flexible approach. However the point has little relevance in the case of front extensions. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is clear in section 7 that the intent of national policy is to secure a high standard of built design. Although paragraph 60 states

that particular architectural styles should not be imposed, in this case the requirement to conform to established design principles is not unsubstantiated and is necessary to improve the character and quality of the area as sought in paragraphs 58 and 64 of the Framework.

10. I have been referred to an appeal case within the Borough Ref APP/E2734/D/16/3147300 and two cases referred to in Cowthorpe where side extensions have been added and which the appellant considers justify allowing this appeal. From the information provided it would not appear to me that any of these cases are sufficiently similar to carry weight. The recent appeal case is a detached dwelling which reportedly was of limited architectural merit in its original form - not the case with Goosemoor Cottages. In respect of the Cowthorpe extensions both appear to be well-mannered side extensions to the existing property in which the original form of the house can continue to be clearly read. I will therefore consider the appeal proposal on its own merits.
11. The proposed front extension would not meet the design criteria of HLP policies HD20 and H15 and, particularly in respect of scale, mass and form, would not be well-proportioned or complementary to the original cottage. Whilst I acknowledge the HEGDG is only guidance, it has been through consultation before adoption and is a material consideration. It presents sound principles in chapters 6, 7 and 8 regarding siting, form and external appearance which have not been observed in the proposed front extension. There is nothing in the guidance to suggest that its principles should not apply in more isolated rural settings and therefore I am not persuaded by the appellant's argument that it should be accorded limited weight.
12. Finally the absence of any third party objections relating solely to the front extension is not a reason to allow a design that would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host dwellings and the countryside surroundings particularly viewed from the south-east. For the reasons given above the front extension would be contrary to HLP policies HD20 and H15 and HCS policy SG4 as well as the Framework.
13. In terms of the single storey rear extension, the proposal would be a sensitively designed, appropriately scaled extension in a contemporary, style with the rear and side faces principally comprised of glazing. The design would complement the character and appearance of the host dwelling and match the rear extension to the adjoining dwelling in scale and height. It would therefore be in accordance with policies. The Council concluded that the rear extension was acceptable and I have no reason to disagree.
14. As such the rear extension would not harm the character and appearance of the dwelling or countryside setting of War Field Lane. The proposed rear extension would be clearly severable both physically and functionally from the front extension works. I will, therefore, issue a split decision allowing the appeal insofar as it relates to the rear extension but dismissing it in relation to the front extension.

Other Matters

15. I note that the appellant wishes to provide accommodation for a growing family and in proposing the front extension, is seeking to make sustainable and effective use of the existing home, an objective which is encouraged by the Framework. I note the appellant's view that the front extension would be the most efficient in terms of the layout of the house and the plot layout however this social benefit does not outweigh the adverse impact which the proposed front extension would

have on the character and appearance of the property and the surroundings of War Field Lane.

Conditions and Conclusions

16. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council against the advice in the *Planning Practice Guidance* and for their clarity. A condition requiring development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans is necessary as this provides certainty that the development would be carried out in the form proposed. A condition requiring matching materials to be used on the external surfaces of the building should also be imposed to protect the character and appearance of the dwelling and of the surroundings to the development.
17. I have considered the matters before me and for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed in relation to the front extension. However, in relation to the rear extension, the appeal should succeed and planning permission be granted.

P. D. Biggers

INSPECTOR