
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 February 2017

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/W/16/3164051
27 Babraham Road, Cambridge CB2 0RB

- 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 Toni Coppolaro against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/1285/FUL, dated 6 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is an extension and alteration to form an Annex.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. No 27 Babraham Road lies on the south eastern fringes of Cambridge. In the vicinity of the site there is only development on the northern side of the road. No 29 Babraham Road, which lies to the east of No 27, is the last house on the road before open countryside. The houses on the road have long plots, with the properties set some way back in their curtilages to allow individual access and parking off the busy road. Properties are generally substantial detached homes; No 27 is a large 2 storey gable fronted house. There is a range of substantial mature landscaping at the front of the plots, giving a feel of an area in transition between the built up urban area and open countryside.
 4. Aside from low key garages and outbuildings, most of the houses have clear land at the front of their plots, and a reasonably consistent building line is maintained. No 27 represents an anomaly to this pattern, as it has a large 5 bay pitched roof garage located at the front of its plot. This is sited gable on to the road, and the white gable with porthole window is noticeable in the street scene when approaching from the west, and is also visible in views from down Granham's Road whose junction with Babraham Road lies just to the south east of the appeal site. The garage has a higher section hosting the three bays closer to the road, with a lower roofed area over an open 2 bay section closer to the house.
 5. The proposal seeks to convert the garage building to allow the roof of the building to be used as a residential annex. This would involve partially
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rebuilding the garage and its roof structure to create a consistent roof line across the structure, increasing the height of the overall structure to 6.5m along the length of the roof ridge from some 4.9m and 4.5m at present. The eaves of the structure would also increase in height from 3.3m and 3m to some 3.8m (all measurements as supplied by the appellant). Four large dormers would be inserted into the roofline, and a new external staircase erected on the road side of the building where the porthole window would be replaced by a full height window and adjacent entrance door.

6. The effect of the additional roof height would increase the prominence of the overall structure in the street scene, with the gable end becoming more noticeable; the figures demonstrate that the additional height at the road side would increase the roof ridge by some 1.6m to ridge with an additional 0.5m on the eaves. Such bulk and massing would be added to by the substantial dormers and the external staircase making the overall structure appear dominant in the street scene.
7. At present the garage, whilst large, still retains an air of subservience towards the host property. This is reflected not only in the massing of the structure but also the differing roof lines, clearly showing an outbuilding that has appeared to have grown over time to meet the needs of the occupants of the host dwelling and still thus has an air of a domestic use. The proposal in not only increasing the height and massing of the garage, but also in regularising the design of the building and incorporating the dormers would create a separate standalone building which would be commercial in appearance, out of character with both the wider area and with No 27 itself. Given the height and size of the proposal I do not consider that landscaping would mitigate the effect of such an appearance.
8. I note that the proposal would allow the appellant's daughter to reside close by, whilst providing some independence. However, on the information provided I do not consider that this justifies the effect that the proposal would have on the street scene.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would be contrary to policies 3/4 and 3/14 of the Cambridge City Council Local Plan 2006, which together state that extensions of existing buildings will be permitted which demonstrate that they have responded to their context, have used the characteristics of the locality to help inform the siting, massing and design of the proposed development and do not visually dominate neighbouring properties. I consider that such policies remain broadly consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular the core planning principles that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and take account of the different roles and character of different areas.
10. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR