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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2017

**by Nick Palmer BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 3 April 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/D/17/3169707**

**Birdbrook House, Parsonage Farm Lane, Great Sampford, Essex CB10 2RR**

- 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 & Mrs Sean McHale against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
  - The application Ref UTT/16/2558/HHF, dated 5 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2016.
  - The development proposed is replacement garaging with a studio over.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal property is one of a pair of semi-detached houses which are perpendicular to Parsonage Farm Lane. It is the rearmost house and is set back from the road. The dwellings are in an isolated position in the open countryside. I saw on my visit that the adjacent fields and their boundaries are open giving wide views of the property from the road in both directions. The site is outside any settlement boundary as defined in the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) (LP) and is in the countryside for planning policy purposes.
  4. The house has been extended through the addition of a two storey extension to the front and single storey extensions. The proposed building would include first floor accommodation within its roof space above a large garage and this would replace the existing single garage which is to the front and side of the house.
  5. Whereas the existing garage has the scale of an ancillary outbuilding the proposal would be much larger. It would have a wide frontage with a half-hipped roof and an external staircase to the side and its overall appearance and proportions would be bulky in relation to the house. Its size and height would be significant in comparison to the house as extended and as such it would not be subservient in scale. It would have the appearance of a separate building rather than an ancillary outbuilding. For these reasons the proposal would not be compatible with the existing house in terms of its scale as required by policy GEN2 of the LP.
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6. The proposal would be visually intrusive within its open setting given the exposed nature of the site. Planting could be provided along the site boundary to soften the appearance of the building but this would not overcome my concern. The appellants have suggested that the building could be moved to accommodate additional planting but I must base my decision on the plans before me.
7. The proposal would not accord with policy S7 of the LP which restricts development in the countryside. While that policy may be more restrictive than the National Planning Policy Framework which allows for some development to take place, it is generally consistent in terms of protecting the countryside for its own sake. For the reasons given I find that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area.
8. The appellants say that the garage would be needed to house two cars to provide security and potentially car charging points. The first floor accommodation would provide improved accommodation for home working and would be of benefit to the family in providing additional sleeping accommodation.
9. Provision of facilities for electric vehicles would be of benefit in reducing fuel use and emissions but the proposed building would exceed what would be necessary to provide such facilities. I find that the provision of improved accommodation is not of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
10. The appellants have drawn my attention to a similar building that was approved within the curtilage of a listed building nearby. The planning officer's report in that case noted that the scale of that proposal was not disproportionate to the host building and that the site in that case was screened from view. Thus there are clear differences between that proposal and the one before me.
11. Planning permission was previously granted for extensions and cart lodges for both properties but that permission has expired. From the drawings and information supplied the proposed cart lodges in that application would have been significantly smaller than the appeal proposal. They would also have been to the rear of the dwellings and in less exposed positions.
12. The proposal would accord with the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development to a limited extent in providing improved family accommodation and possibly benefitting the local economy through its construction. Reduction of the need to travel and in terms of emissions would accord with the environmental dimension. However the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified would weigh significantly against the environmental dimension and considered as a whole, the proposal would not be sustainable for these reasons.

## **Conclusion**

13. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Nick Palmer*

INSPECTOR