

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2017

by J Gilbert MA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/17/3170122

Glencol Allens Meadow, The Wash, Furneux Pelham, Buntingford SG9 0JY

- 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 and Mrs C Chipperfield against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/16/2678/HH, dated 26 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two storey side extension at Glencol Allens Meadow, The Wash, Furneux Pelham, Buntingford SG9 0JY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/16/2678/HH, dated 26 November 2016, 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 approved plans: 879/P01; 879/P02A; 879/P03A; 879/P04A.
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown on plan 879/P03A.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building, the site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The previously extended detached chalet bungalow at Glencol Allens Meadow lies at the end of a row of three houses, all of which are set back from and at some height above the road. In addition to having well-established gardens to the front and rear, the house is directly adjacent to a manège, with stables and a further small field located beyond the manège. These equestrian facilities are all partially screened from the road by trees, hedging and banking. The house and its immediate neighbours form one of the scattered groups of houses along The Wash and Ginns Road, which lie outside the village of Furneux Pelham. The area is rural in nature and the houses are only separated from large open fields by hedging and trees.
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4. Policy GBC3 (c) of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007 (the Local Plan) is relevant insofar as it allows limited extensions to dwellings in the rural area of East Hertfordshire beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt in accordance with Policy ENV5 of the same Local Plan. Policy ENV5 requires extensions, either by themselves or cumulatively with other extensions, not to disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling nor intrude on the openness or rural qualities of the surrounding area.
5. The site is partially visible from the large field to the rear, with the existing first floor and roof of the house visible at some viewpoints along the field margin. The two-storey side extension is proposed on the southern side of the house on a strip of land separating the existing house from the manège. When taken with the existing extension to the building, the extensions would significantly enlarge the original house. Nevertheless, the proposed extension would be compatible with the simple character of the existing house, in terms of design, layout and materials, and the size of the gardens and manège forming the wider site allow for the proposed extension to the house to be accommodated with ease. No changes to the mature landscaping are proposed in relation to the boundaries of the site. Screening in the form of hedges, trees, and raised banks would therefore partially screen the proposed extension from the road when approaching the site from the south. A very small section of low hedging is proposed for removal adjacent to the house and manège. However, this is not visible from the road and would not reduce existing screening of the property from the roadside.
6. Although the existing house can be seen from some vantage points in the field to the rear of the property, I do not consider that the introduction of this further two-storey side extension to the property would significantly alter the views from the field and the wider rural area. The house would remain partially screened by hedging which separates the rear garden and the field. Given the north-south alignment of the house and the proposed introduction of the extension at the southern end of the house, the house's footprint would not be in greater proximity than the existing house to the site's eastern boundary with open fields.
7. Furthermore, the house lies within a small group of other houses along the road. The character of this part of the road is one of detached houses of a range of ages and architectural styles scattered along the side of the road. As a result of the screening of the site, the maintained alignment of the north-south footprint of the house, and the essentially residential nature of the land between the open fields and the road, the proposed extension would not detrimentally affect the openness and rural qualities of the area.
8. To summarise, I find that the effect of the proposed development on the rural character and appearance of the property, site and surrounding area would be acceptable. Therefore, while not in accordance with Policies GBC3(c) and ENV5 of the Local Plan insofar as they relate to the cumulative effect of extensions on the size and scale of an original dwelling, the site specific circumstances indicate that it would not intrude into the openness and rural qualities of the surrounding area. Furthermore, it would accord with Policies ENV1 and ENV6 of the Local Plan. The former is a general policy which aims to secure a high standard of design in all new development, while Policy ENV6 contains criteria which should be met by domestic extensions. The proposal would also be compliant with a core planning principle of the National Planning Policy

Framework, which seeks to secure high quality design. The Council has also referred to Policy HOU11 of the pre-submission version of the East Herts District Plan. This makes reference to extensions being subservient, but the plan has not yet been examined and I consequently give it limited weight.

Conclusion

9. Despite some conflict with specific policies, the proposed development accords with the overall development plan. Consequently, for the reasons given above, and having had regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.
10. Subject to a condition requiring the control of external materials for construction to ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory, the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the host building, site and the surrounding area. In addition, conditions should be imposed to require the standard time limits and set out the approved plans in the interests of certainty.

J Gilbert

INSPECTOR