

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2017

by Ian McHugh Dip TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H3510/D/17/3175109

8 Holly Close, Red Lodge, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP28 8LP

- 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 Stephen Stopher against the decision of Forest Heath District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/17/0412/HH, dated 25 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is a side extension and a loft extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. These are: the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of both the existing dwelling and the area; and the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupants of number 52 Heathersett Way (number 52), with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a small single storey, semi-detached bungalow, which is situated within a residential estate. It occupies a relatively prominent position on the corner of Holly Close and Heathersett Way. In the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, the area is characterised by single storey properties, although the wider area also includes two storey dwellings. The neighbouring properties are single storey and there is little evidence of dormer roof extensions or first floor accommodation in the immediate locality.
 4. The appeal proposal is to extend the existing bungalow at the side towards Heathersett Way and to construct a rear dormer roof extension across virtually the full width of the both the proposed side extension and the existing rear roof. In addition, three roof lights would be installed on the front roof slope, facing Holly Close. The proposed development would provide additional bedroom, storage and home office accommodation at the property.
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5. Whilst, in my opinion, the proposed side extension would be acceptable in terms of its design, scale and impact on the streetscene, I consider that the proposed rear dormer extension would be an overly dominant and incongruous addition to the roof because of its overall size and design. As such, it would fail to respect the scale and character of the existing bungalow.
6. Furthermore, the proposed dormer would be clearly visible from Heathersett Way. As there are no other dormers in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, I consider that it would appear as a discordant element in the streetscene, which would be at odds with the prevailing character with the area.
7. In reaching my decision, I have noted that the appellant contends that the proposal falls within 'permitted development' limits. No further evidence to support this assertion has been submitted and, therefore, I am unable to attribute any weight to this argument.
8. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would conflict with Policies DM2 and DM24 of the Council's Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015 (DMP), and with Policy CS5 of the Forest Heath Core Strategy 2010. These policies generally seek (amongst other things) to ensure that development is of a high quality design, which reflects its surroundings and also for domestic extensions to respect the scale, character and design of existing dwellings. In addition, the proposal would also conflict with paragraphs 17 and 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which also require high quality design, and for new development to add to the overall quality of the area and to reflect the identity of local surroundings.

Living Conditions

9. The appeal property has a relatively small garden, which backs onto the side elevation and rear garden of the neighbouring bungalow at number 52 (which I visited at my site inspection). The depth of the garden at the appeal property is disputed by the Council and the appellant. However, even when taking the appellant's measurement of over 7m (compared to the Council's quoted distance of 6.5m), I consider that the proposed rear dormer extension would result in an unacceptable threat to the privacy of the occupants of number 52, particularly, when using their rear garden. Although part of the dormer would look directly at the side wall of number 52, part of it would have a direct view into the garden. Given the relatively short distance between the two properties, I consider that it would make the garden of number 52 a less enjoyable place in which to be.
10. Consequently, I find that the proposal would conflict with Policy DM24 (c) of the DMP, which states that extensions to domestic properties will be permitted, provided the proposal would not adversely affect the amenity of the occupants of nearby properties. In addition, the proposal would also fail to accord with one of the core principles of the Framework, which is to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings (paragraph 17).

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR