

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 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/W0530/D/17/3178089

2 The Lakes, Twentypence Road, Cottenham, Cambridge, CB24 8PP

- 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 J Dean against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref S/0251/17/FL, dated 12 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is a two storey front extension to existing dwelling and internal alterations and changes to rear doors and windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council officer's report refers to plan reference: 16/1224/PL.22 rev G. However, the appellant states that this plan was never submitted formally for determination and that the correct plan is reference: 16/1224/PL.22 rev F. The Council has subsequently confirmed that rev F is the correct plan and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the rural area in which it is located.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached two storey house, which is situated within a group of four dwellings that are located in a relatively remote rural location. The site is accessed off a private drive and the property is set well-back from Twentypence Road. It is screened by trees and other vegetation and is not readily visible from public view.
 5. The proposal is to extend the house at the front by constructing a two storey extension with a hipped roof. The extension would provide a study and play room on the ground floor and a bedroom with an en-suite at first floor level. The proposed extension would add significantly to the mass and scale of built development at the property. However, the Council states that, despite its size,
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the extension would be less than a 50% increase in floorspace, which is a requirement of Policy HG/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework (LDF).

6. Nevertheless, the Council contends that the proposal would be out of scale and character with the existing dwelling and that it would have an unacceptable impact on its surroundings (which are also requirements of Policy HG/6). The Council also points to the proposed use of timber cladding, which it considers to be unacceptable and at odds with the character of the area.
7. In addition, the Council states that there is conflict with Policy DP/2 of the LDF, which requires new development to be of high quality design and compatible with its surroundings, in terms of its scale and mass. In my opinion, these policies accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which also requires high quality design and for developments to respond to local character and to reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials (paragraphs 17 and 58).
8. I acknowledge that the proposed extension would not be visible from public view and that it would sit within a group of properties that have also been significantly extended and altered. However, in my opinion, the proposal would appear as a bulky and dominant addition to the property, particularly when viewed from the sides. The existing dwelling is characterised by its relatively narrow and linear shape and the extent of the projection of the extension beyond the front of the existing dwelling, would, in my opinion, be at odds with this distinctive form. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would be unacceptably harmful to the existing character and appearance of the dwelling.
9. In reaching my decision, I have given weight to the benefits to the appellants, in terms of providing increased accommodation, but I see no reason as to why an alternative design could not provide some additional space. Consequently, I find that the appeal proposal would conflict with the relevant policies of the LDF and with the Framework, as referred to above.
10. However, I am not persuaded that the proposal would be harmful to the rural character of the area. The extension would be sited within the built confines of the existing group of dwellings and it would not intrude into open countryside. In addition, the use of timber boarding would not be harmful, given the mixture of existing external facing materials on properties at The Lakes. However, this does not outweigh the harm that I have identified above.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above in respect of the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR