
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 April 2019

by Sian Griffiths BSc(Hons) DipTP MScRealEst MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/19/3222552

4 Rise Cottages, Widford Road, Hunsdon, Ware SG12 8SB

- 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 John McCalpin against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/18/2272/HH, dated 14 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is Ground Floor Rear Extension and First Floor Part Side and Rear Extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issue is the impact on the character and appearance of the area.
3. Rise Cottages are a small linear development of semi-detached houses located along the eastern side of Widford Road, located to the north of the village of Hunsdon. The development has a service road which runs in a shallow crescent and the houses are set some way back off the main road.
4. The development is located within a 'Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt' covered by Policy GBR2 of the East Herts District Plan (October 2018) (LP) which seeks to protect the open countryside from unchecked development, subject to several 'closed list' exceptions.
5. The development pattern is regular, with each semi-detached 'block' being punctuated by a space within which there are timber or brick garages serving each house. The spaces between each block afford views to the open countryside beyond and this gives the area an open and spacious character.
6. The property is located where the service road bends slightly and as a result, the plot has a slightly wider rear garden than front garden. The plot associated with No 4 is therefore somewhat narrower than the other properties within the development.
7. No 4 Rise Cottages is a semi-detached, 2 storey, 3 bedroomed house with a single storey brick built attached garage. The proposed extension would result in the house extending to the boundary with neighbouring property at No 5,

significantly reducing the gap between the two properties. This would undermine the character and appearance of the area.

8. Further, if a similar extension was permitted for No 5, it would close the gap entirely, leading to a terracing effect. Policy HOU11 of the LP seeks a minimum separation of 1m between the first-floor flank wall of a proposed extension and the common curtilage. The appeal proposals show 0.25m from the first-floor flank wall.
9. I note that the appellants have sought to reduce the size of the first-floor extension to ensure it would be more 'set back' and subservient to the main house. However, given the overall width of the proposals of the appeal proposals before me, my concerns remain.
10. I therefore find the proposals to be contrary to Policies DES4 and HOU11 of the LP which seeks quality design that responds to site constraints and development that would not result in harmful terracing effects, respectively. I also find the proposals to be contrary to GBR2(d) of the LP where the appeal proposals would undermine the character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has raised the point that these works would better accommodate their growing family, allowing them to remain in the area. I am sympathetic to this. However, I consider that there are other means by which the house could be extended. That argument does not therefore overcome the harm I have identified.
12. I note the appellants argument about a similar scheme at No 16 Rise Cottages which was granted consent. At the site visit, I observed that a small number of the Rise Cottages properties have been subject to two storey side extensions. However, those that had, still had a significant space to their boundaries with their neighbours such that the open character was not compromised. In any case, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given above, I consider the appeal should be dismissed.

Sian Griffiths

INSPECTOR