
Appeal Decision

by Graham Chamberlain BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/D/20/3245260

Wychwood Lodge, The Heath, Hatfield Heath, Essex CM22 7AD

- 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 Mark Guirey against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/19/2368/HHF, dated 23 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey rear extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a two-storey rear extension at Wychwood Lodge, The Heath, Hatfield Heath, Essex CM22 7AD, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: UTT/19/2368/HHF, dated 23 September 2019, subject to the following conditions.
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: The Location/Street Plan and drawings 1544-01, 1544-02, 1544-03 Rev C, 1544-04 Rev C, 1544-05 Rev C.

Preliminary Matters

2. In response to travel restrictions currently in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic I have determined this appeal without a physical site visit. This is because I have been able to reach a decision based on the information already available, supplemented by additional evidence supplied by the appellant and sent to the Council for comment. The appellant and the Council have agreed either directly or implicitly to the appeal proceeding on this basis.

Reasons

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.
4. The appeal property is a detached two-storey dwelling that sits comfortably in its spacious and verdant plot positioned back from the road behind a hedge. The size, position and layout of the appeal property is typical of the area and therefore the dwelling is compatible with its immediate surroundings.

5. The existing rear elevation of the appeal property encompasses a central two-storey projecting gabled section with dormer windows either side. This provides an attractive well-balanced composition. The appeal scheme would be a rear extension formed from slightly extending the existing rear projection with two deeper gabled additions either side.
6. The maximum depth of the proposed extension would be notably less than the span of the brick gable ends of the existing property. In this respect the proposal would respond to the proportions of the host property in a recessive way. This sense of subservience would also be greatly aided by the position of the ridges at a lower level than the existing and from setting the side elevations of the extension in from those of the host property. The subservience of the massing and the articulation provided by these aspects of the design would ensure that the extension is not viewed as either visually bulky or disproportionate in size. In addition, the external finishing materials of the extension would match those of the front and rear elevations of the host property as would the size, design and proportions of the windows. Overall, the appeal property once extended would retain a pleasing balanced composition.
7. Thus, the proposed extension would complement the scale, size and general design of the host property. This, taken with the limited impact it would have on the street scene because of its rear location, would preserve the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal would adhere to Policies GEN2 and H8 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, which seek to secure development that is generally compatible with its surroundings and extensions that respect the scale, design and external materials of the original building.

Other Matters and Conditions

8. In arriving at my findings, I have carefully considered the previous appeal decision¹. However, the scheme before me is smaller and exhibits a materially different design. As such, the two schemes are not directly comparable and consequently there is no inconsistency in the different findings. The proposal would preserve the setting of the adjacent countryside, also designated as Green Belt, given its location within the development limits of the village, the intervening screening and its proportionate size. The evidence before me does not demonstrate, as a material consideration, that the proposal would conflict with Policies SP9, SP10, D1 and H4 of the emerging Local Plan, which is not at an advanced stage and therefore carries limited weight in any event.
9. I have had regard to the advice in the Planning Practice Guide and the conditions suggested by the Council. It is necessary in the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the area to ensure that the development is undertaken in accordance with the approved drawings and that the external materials match the host property.

Conclusion

10. The appeal scheme would adhere to the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal succeeds.

Graham Chamberlain INSPECTOR

¹ APP/C1570/D/19/3230461 – which related to a proposal for a two-storey rear extension at the appeal property