



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2020

by Christopher Miell MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/D/20/3250349

Magnolia Cottage, Shells Lane, Shepton Beauchamp, Ilminster TA19 0LX

- 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 N. Urch against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03162/HOU, dated 18 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'demolition of existing garage conversion; erection of 2 storey side extension, new dormer to front elevation & extended dormer on rear roof slope'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached chalet bungalow that occupies an elevated plot, which is served by Shells Lane. The surrounding area has a semi-rural character and there are a mix of property types from a variety of architectural periods located along Shells Lane.
4. The proposal is for a two-storey extension to the side of the existing dwelling. As part of the works a flat roof dormer window would be constructed on the front elevation, whilst the existing flat roof dormer window to the rear roof slope would be extended. The extension would have a gabled roof form and it would be constructed from materials to match the host building. To facilitate the proposal, an existing garage conversion to the side of the host building would be demolished.
5. The appellant explains that the appeal property and the adjoining semi-detached dwelling, known as Lavender Cottage, were historically one detached property, which was sub-divided approximately five years ago. He argues, that as a result of the conversion and later alterations, the respective properties are of a differing appearance and no longer resemble a pair of 'mirror image' semi-detached dwellings. For this reason, he explains that the aim of the proposal is to 'rebuild the integrity of Magnolia Cottage' and therefore the development has been deliberately designed to not be subservient to the host building.

6. Whilst I recognise that the respective semi-detached dwellings have differing architectural features, such as the presence of dormer windows on the front slope of the appeal property, whereas there are no dormer windows to the front of Lavender Cottage, the pair of semi-detached dwellings are of a comparable scale and constructed from similar materials. In addition, the properties have a shared roof form which has a low eaves height with a high ridge. Consequently, the properties appear well balanced and retain a degree of symmetry, which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The Council's design guide¹ (the 'design guide') states "*No extension should dominate the existing house in terms of size or shape. Extensions should generally be subservient, appearing as if they have a 'supporting role' to the existing house. Occasionally it may be agreed that it is appropriate to completely re-design a house, but usually an extension should read as a subservient addition*". Given the balanced appearance of the existing semi-detached dwellings, I share the Council's view that any extension(s) at the appeal site should be subservient to the host building.
8. In this instance, the overall scale of the proposed extension would be significant and excessive in the context of the proportions of the existing dwelling and the adjoining semi-detached property. In particular, the gable roof form and the flat roof dormer window on the front roof slope would appear as dominant and visually jarring forms of development when viewed in the context of Lavender Cottage. As such, the proposed extension would fail to create a subservient relationship with the host building. Consequently, the proposal would unacceptably diminish the architectural integrity of the host building and the pair of semi-detached properties.
9. In addition, and for the reasons above, when viewed in the context of the surrounding area, and taking account of the elevated nature of the appeal site, the proposed extension would appear as an unduly prominent form of development, causing significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
10. I acknowledge that the proposal would be predominately constructed on the footprint of the existing garage conversion and that the amount of additional accommodation on the ground floor would be limited. However, the overall scale of the proposal would be significantly larger than the existing garage conversion and the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
11. My attention has been drawn to respective planning approvals at Lambrook Road, Shepton Beauchamp and Goose Lane, Horton, both of which relate to the erection of substantial two storey side extensions that are not subservient to the host building. However, I am not aware of the full circumstances in relation to those cases. In any event, both properties are located a considerable distance away from the appeal site and do not therefore contribute directly to the character of the local area.
12. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal does not accord with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan

¹ Extensions and alterations to houses – A design guide (South Somerset District Council, 2010)

2006-2028 (Adopted March 2015), which amongst other things requires development to be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district. In addition, the proposal does not accord with the advice contained within the Council's design guide, which explains that extensions should generally be subservient to the host building.

Other Matters

13. Reference has been made with regards to the Council's handling of the planning application. However, this is not relevant to the consideration of the appeal.
14. The proposed development would result in the removal of an existing oil tank at the appeal property. The appellant explains that the oil tank would likely be replaced by an air-source heat pump. If this were the case, this would provide a cleaner source of energy and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Whilst this matter weighs positively in favour of the development, it is not significant enough to alter or outweigh my conclusion.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Christopher Miell

INSPECTOR