



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 July 2020

by D. Szymanski, BSc (Hons) MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V0510/D/20/3246531

Oneway, Headleys Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs, CB6 2LH

- 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 & Mrs Alan Blahy against the decision of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: 19/01086/FUL dated 7 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is first floor extension above existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The original planning application form lists the site address as Hedleys Lane. Based upon my site visit, the decision notice and appeal form the correct address is Headleys Lane, so I have used this in the banner heading above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling set within a large verdant plot fronting Headleys Lane, from which the land rises up to the dwelling. Notwithstanding surrounding vegetation, the dwelling is notably visible when approaching it on Headleys Lane from the north including around the junction with High Street into the village. The original gable fronted dwelling has been extended sympathetically with a cross gable roof two storey extension on its southern side. The width, fenestration, being flush with the front wall, and its roof pitch results in that extension being in keeping with the character, appearance and proportions of the original dwelling.
5. The double garage on its northern side appears wider than the original dwellinghouse and occupies well over one third of the overall front facade. It integrates a substantially larger, deeper and shallower pitched gable roof than any of the other individual gable roof elements, and is significantly noticeable as such. However, whilst the double garage roof is not entirely in keeping with

- the original dwelling, the single storey eaves and ridge being no higher than the adjoining eaves gives it some subservience to the host dwelling.
6. The extension would considerably increase the height and prominence of the shallower roof. Although it would be no wider than the existing double garage, as the roof would join onto the existing gable roof, it would have a markedly greater width than at present. The effect of the extension would be that the northern shallower roofed side of the dwelling would become a dominating feature that would not appear subservient to the host dwelling. Its visibility from rights of way to the south of Headleys Lane would be limited. However, it would be significantly more prominent when viewed from a significant length of Headleys Lane to the north and the surrounding land. Although traffic flow appears limited, this does not diminish the nature of the harm.
 7. Due to the small gaps between them, the three new first floor windows would significantly increase the overall proportion of glazing such that it would be out of keeping with the existing first floor facade. This would further contribute to skewing the proportions of the existing dwelling. For the reasons set out above the development would not be in keeping with and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
 8. I note the officer report for application Ref: 19/00333/FUL at Witcham Lodge. At my visit this building appeared to have been extended with single and two storey extensions. The scale, width and proportions of those extensions appeared subservient to the host dwelling, and the two storey extension appeared match the existing roof pitch. I noted another dwelling on High Street that appeared to have been sympathetically extended in a similar manner. Developments referred to at Market Way and Park Farm appear to be replacement dwellings. I do not have the plans, or full details of the circumstances that lead to those decisions (e.g. all the relevant development plan policies and material considerations). However, as replacement dwellings they are not directly comparable to the appeal scheme. In any case, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.
 9. Whilst the appeal site includes mature vegetation, I have not been provided with a means of securing this as long term mitigation for the proposal. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that it would grow to an extent to adequately screen the development. The plans show the extension to be finished in hardiplank and the appellant has offered a brickwork finish. Notwithstanding the lack of local objection, being set back from the façade, the use of matching tiles and windows, the proposed and alternative suggested materials would not mitigate the harm I have found.
 10. For the reasons set out above the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area and conflicts with Policies ENV2 and HOU8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2015) (the Local Plan). These require development is designed to a high quality and demonstrates its scale, form, design and character is in keeping with the original dwelling, and that it protects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. Policy ENV2 requires regard is had to the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012) (the SPD). The development would also be in conflict with the advice in the SPD that the original building should pre-dominate, and an extension should generally be subservient.

Other Matters

11. Although the appellant expresses some dissatisfaction about the way in which consideration of the proposal and communication has been dealt with by the Council, this is outside the remit of a Section 78 appeal. Based upon the planning merits of the development, for the reasons set above, I have found the Council's overall reasoning for their decision as set out in the delegated report and decision notice to be sound.

Conclusions

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

Dan Szymanski

INSPECTOR