
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 August 2020

by Paul Thompson DipTRP MAUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/D/20/3253589

The Hollies, Station Road, Elsenham CM22 6LA

- 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 David Smailes against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/20/0285/HHF, dated 5 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of new garage with Home Office / Gym over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of new garage with Home Office / Gym over at The Hollies, Station Road, Elsenham CM22 6LA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref UTT/20/0285/HHF, dated 5 February 2020, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 433/S/001 and 433/P/002B.
 - 3) 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing house, the street scene and the surrounding locality.

Reasons

3. The residential area within which the site is situated is formed of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows of a varied scale and appearance, but the properties are arranged in a dense configuration with many occupying the whole of the width of their plots.
4. The appeal property is a two-storey house arranged on an L-shape plan with a long offshoot to the northwest corner at the rear. The façades of the house are finished with a brick plinth and cream render and the roofs are clad in plain tiles and overhang with pronounced eaves and exposed rafters. The front roof slope incorporates three equally proportioned gabled dormers, beneath which

there is a small projection forward housing an open gable fronted porch and lean-to which accommodates part of a family room. The north and south elevations are solid in appearance but the south side incorporates an exposed brick chimney stack.

5. The side and rear boundaries of the site are enclosed by tall close-boarded fencing but a public footpath runs parallel with the south boundary and around to the rear where it opens out into a large public open space. The existing house is therefore highly visible from the public realm.
6. The proposed development would be sited to the south side of the house, on the site of the existing detached garage. At the front, the proposal would be set back of the façade and down from the existing ridgeline. The roof pitch, eaves height and detailing would also be identical to the existing. In particular, rafters would be exposed at the eaves and a dormer window of similar proportions to those existing would occupy the roof slope.
7. The ground floor would be set back from the first floor with a jetty overhang above. Although this would be a new architectural feature not previously associated with the appeal property, it would be of traditional proportions and relatively small in scale in the context of the overall house.
8. The proposal would therefore incorporate a visual break and be subservient to the principal façade at the front of the house, which would ensure that this would continue to dominate in views of the house from within the street scene.
9. Although the proposed development would be visible along the majority of the south boundary of the site, the primarily solid exterior presented would be similar in appearance to the south elevations of the house and the existing rear gabled projection, further north in the site, as it would be detailed at the verge and eaves. This would add visual interest. Meanwhile, from the rear, the gable end would incorporate a large triangular topped window that would follow the lines of the verge above. This would be a decidedly more modern feature, but it would not appear uncomfortable in the context of the rear façade or dominate it, as it would be well-proportioned in relation to the solid elements of the gable end.
10. Having regard to all of the above, while the proposal would be a large addition to the existing house, it would be well-proportioned and detailed and utilise a carefully selected palette of materials that would complement and assimilate with the existing house. Moreover, the proposal would appear subservient and sympathetic to the existing house and not appear as a dominant feature in its immediate context, particularly as many of the houses in the locality occupy the majority of the width of their plots.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing house, the street scene and the surrounding locality. Hence, the proposal would accord with Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (Adopted January 2005) which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that development is compatible with the scale, form, layout, appearance and materials of surrounding buildings.
12. I note that paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) refers to the response to local character and design standards but this relates to the layout of development in respect of highway matters,

principally the relationship between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Paragraph 127 of the Framework is of greater relevance to the appeal proposal, as it seeks to ensure that developments, amongst other things, are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. The proposed development would not conflict with these aims.

Other Matters

13. I note that the Council did not find harm with respect to biodiversity and nature conservation, vehicle parking standards and living conditions. There is no substantive evidence before me that would lead me to an alternative conclusion in respect of these matters, so I find no reason to dispute the positions adopted by the Council in their Officer Report. Consideration of these matters does not therefore lead me to a different conclusion on the main issue.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard time limit for the appeal, in the interests of clarity and the character and appearance of the existing house, street scene and surrounding locality, I have specified the approved plans and that the materials of construction shall match those of the existing house.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Paul Thompson

INSPECTOR