
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 July 2020

by D M Young JP BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI MIHE

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/20/3247382

1 The Bourne, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 2HZ

- 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 Cowell against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/19/2064/HH, dated 9 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey extension to the side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two-storey extension to the side at 1 The Bourne, Bishops Stortford CM23 2HZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/19/2064/HH, dated 9 October 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: FP.05.10.19, FP.04.10.19 A and FP.02.10.19 A.
 - 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. This is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Amongst other things, Policies DES4 and HOU11 of the "*East Herts District Local Plan*" 2018 (the LP) state that extensions should make efficient use of the land and respect the character of the site and the surrounding area, in terms of their scale, height, massing, orientation, layout, and building materials.
4. As I saw when I conducted my site visit, the surrounding area contains an eclectic mix of building types with differing designs, layouts and materials. Aside from the presence of mature landscaping along Stanstead Road, I found the area generally lacks a strong or distinctive character and is not overly sensitive in architectural or streetscape terms.

5. The Bourne is a more modern development comprising two terraces of five dwellings arranged around a small cul-de-sac. The host building is an end-terrace property occupying a corner position at the junction of The Bourne and Stanstead Road. According to the Council, the two-storey side extension would be three metres in width. It would extend the property westwards in the direction of Stanstead Road mostly occupying the side garden in the process.
6. The front elevation and roof would both be recessed behind and below the existing dwelling. The extension would therefore be clearly distinguishable from the original dwelling and would not challenge its dominance or legibility nor that of the wider terrace. The proposed materials would match the existing dwelling. The massing and design of the side elevation fronting Stanstead Road would largely respect that of the existing dwelling minus the chimney breast.
7. In effect the only meaningful change would be that the side elevation would be approximately three metres closer to Stanstead Road. Having read the Officer's Report it is not clear to me why that would be a particular problem given the area's varied character.
8. I accept that dwellings along Stanstead Road tend to be set back generously from the roadside, something which along with the presence of mature trees, lends the road a spacious character. However, the degree of set back is far from uniform as illustrated by 103 Stanstead Road directly opposite the appeal site. Moreover, the extension would not be visible over a wide area. In longer distance views from the north, the extension would be concealed by mature landscaping along the eastern flank of Stanstead Road. Much the same would apply to views from the south. Although the extension would be readily apparent in public views in the immediate vicinity of The Bourne, this would not be in a way that could reasonably be described as harmful given the site's context.
9. Based on the foregoing, I find the Council's concerns about the scale, siting and design of the extension to be unconvincing and overplayed. The extension would be an appropriate and subservient addition to the host dwelling with a marginal effect on the Stanstead Road street scene. I therefore conclude that the development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with LP Policies DES4 and HOU11.

Conclusion

10. Based on the foregoing and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed. To provide certainty and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the extension, I have imposed conditions relating to time limits, the approved plans and external facing materials.

D. M. Young

Inspector