



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 September 2020

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/20/3256191

66 Rib Vale, Bengoe, Hertford, SG14 3LF

- 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 R. Haworth against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/20/0629/HH, dated 24 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as "erection of a single storey front extension to facilitate the erection of a front porch & partial conversion/extension of existing garage to main dwelling, first floor front extension & a first floor rear extension. Work to also include alterations to fenestration on side and rear elevations, installation of 1 x front facing roof light, extension of 1 x existing front facing dormer, installation of pitched roof to existing front dormer and the extension of & installation of pitched roof to existing rear dormer".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

2. The Council's sole reason for refusal only refers to the proposed front extension, and the officer's report makes clear that it is only this element of the development proposed to which the Council objects. I see no reason to disagree with this conclusion and have determined the appeal accordingly.
3. The main issue is therefore the effect of the proposed front extension on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Houses in Rib Vale comprise a mix of design styles, predominantly two-storey or 1.5 storeys facing the street. The appeal property is part of a group of houses of similar appearance located on both sides of the street towards one end of Rib Vale. There is some variety in the appearance of individual properties within this group, with side extensions and roof alterations added in some instances. However, there is overall uniformity of character with each property being 1.5 storeys in height facing the street with between one and three dormers on the front roof slope. In addition, the alignment of these properties follows the curve of the road, with a staggered building line revealing each property in turn when seen from the street. Together these houses form a distinct group within the Rib Vale street scene.

5. The development proposed would involve the addition of a substantial front extension to the appeal property. This extension would include two-storey gable-roofed projections flanking the front entrance. While set down from the ridgeline of the roof, these projecting elements would be substantial additions to the front elevation of the dwelling and would significantly alter its appearance. The appeal property would as a result appear as an uncharacteristic and incongruous two-storey house within this distinct group of 1.5 storey houses both from the front and the side and would be out of keeping within the street scene.
6. There is variety in the appearance of properties within Rib Vale as a whole. However, properties of similar appearance are commonly grouped together, and this results in a pleasing consistency and rhythm within the wider street scene. Extensions to other properties in Rib Vale have generally been sympathetic and maintained the overall character of the host properties within the street scene. The property on Windmill Lane referred to by the appellant is not part of a uniform group as the appeal property is. The planning permission granted for front extensions to that property therefore attracts limited weight in the determination of this appeal.
7. The proposed front extension would result in the appeal property appearing out of keeping within the Rib Vale street scene and would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to the requirements of policies HOU11 and DES4 of the East Herts District Plan 2018. These policies require, amongst other criteria, extensions to dwellings to be of a form and design appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons set out above, the appeal fails.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR