
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 November 2020

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/20/3252767

Hillside House, Newmarket Road, Melbourn SG8 7LZ

- 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 Wendy Bishop against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01145/FUL, dated 6 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is replacement of existing ground floor bedroom and attached garage with two storey extension with two balconies.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement of existing ground floor bedroom and attached garage with two storey extension with two balconies at Hillside House, Newmarket Road, Melbourn SG8 7LZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/01145/FUL, dated 6 February 2020, 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: H101 A; H 01B; HSH 01; HSH 02; HSH 03; HSH 04; H10; H 05 G; H 02 F; H 03 F; H 04 F and H 06 B.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby approved shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matters

2. I have adopted the amended description of the development as set out on the Council's decision notice and as subsequently agreed by the appellant.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of Hillside House and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Hillside House is a detached two storey dwelling set towards the rear of a sizeable plot alongside the busy A505. Existing and largely dense hedges, shrubs and trees form a substantial visual screen along the roadside frontage and, to a lesser extent, the western plot boundary. The rear garden boundary is open and raised above the levels of the surrounding agricultural fields,

- affording open views across the surrounding countryside and, conversely, of the house from the public right of way a short distance away across the intervening field.
5. Essentially T-shaped, the main body of the house has been supplemented by a mix of flat and pitched roof single storey elements at the rear and western sides. The flat roofed garage and bedroom at the side of the property, although largely screened in longer views from beyond the site to the front (north) and side (west) by boundary vegetation, are particularly noticeable at closer quarters from within the plot, and from the rear across the fields.
 6. The proposed extension would be a substantial addition to the property, even if its overall footprint area and width would not be significantly greater in either sense than that of the existing single storey elements at the side of the property. As a two-storey extension it would clearly also have substantially greater massing and bulk at first floor level than the single storey flat roofed elements. As a consequence, the extended property would be seen as a significantly larger extended property than the one which currently exists, albeit that its relative visibility would be moderated by existing boundary vegetation along the north and west plot boundaries.
 7. The effect of the extension on the dwelling would not be harmful, however. The proposed extension clearly makes efforts to reflect the form, character and appearance of the existing property. The extension's projecting peaked two storey gables front and rear would reflect those on the eastern side of the existing house. They would also provide a means to balance the elevations front and rear by bookending the main, middle portion of the house. Beyond the new peaked two storey bays, the further westward element of the extension would appear as both a proportionate and subservient extension when set against the extended façade as a whole.
 8. Taken as a whole therefore, the extension would not be a subservient addition to the existing dwelling due to its additional width at first floor level, which would not be dissimilar to the width of the existing house. However, it would be a well-designed and well thought out extension which would pick up on the distinctive and distinguishing elements of the existing building and work those into an extension, the form of which would respect the character and appearance of the existing building. The more contemporary appearance of the rear elevation would take advantage of the open and expansive southerly views across the gently rolling agrarian countryside which typifies the surrounding area. The property's extended rear elevation would be particularly visible from the nearby public right of way, but from a distance and where it would be seen in the context of the sprawl of low-level agricultural buildings on the neighbouring site. I am content that the proposal would not therefore change or harm the dwelling's setting or character within the surrounding countryside.
 9. Nor would the proposed extension materially alter or harm the dwelling's setting within its plot, and there are not any residential properties close by for the purposes of comparison or judgement in terms of scale, character or appearance. Although the extension would imbue the property with a substantial width along its long-axis parallel to the road, such a form would not be altogether alien in the wider vicinity, with other properties further north displaying similarly wide frontages parallel to the roadside. In a generously

sized plot set in an open and expansive rolling countryside setting, I am not persuaded that the proposed extension would materially or harmfully change the dwelling's impact on its setting or wider surroundings. Furthermore, although not subservient to the existing house, I am satisfied that the proposed extension's detailing and form would be in scale and character with the existing house.

10. For these reasons, I am satisfied that the proposed extension, if somewhat large, would be an appropriate response to the existing property. It would respond to the distinctive features of the existing dwelling and introduce a pleasing sense of balance to the dwelling whilst maintaining a modest scale and character in an open and expansive countryside setting. There would be no conflict with South Cambridgeshire Local Plan policies H/13 and HQ/1 as a consequence.

Conditions

11. I have considered the suggested conditions set out in the Council's appeal questionnaire in light of the advice and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the time limit and plans conditions, which are reasonable and necessary in order to provide certainty, a condition requiring the use of matching materials is also imposed. A condition to this effect would be both necessary and reasonable to ensure the use of appropriate materials to the extension's elevations and roof.

Conclusion

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

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR