



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2021

by S Tudhope LLB (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/20/3259054

172 Stansted Road, Bishops Stortford CM23 2AR

- 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 Neil Watts against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/20/1129/HH, dated 17 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is Ground floor rear extension, first floor rear extension, ground floor side extension and hip to gable loft conversion with 3no rooflights to front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description in the header above is taken from the planning application form. However, the description on the appeal form and the Council's decision is "Ground floor side and rear extension, first floor rear extension. Hip to gable roof extension with rear dormer, insertion of 3 roof lights to front elevation and insertion of window to side". This more accurately describes the proposal and I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.
3. The Council suggested that I visit the neighbouring property, 170 Stansted Road (No 170), in order to assess the proposal from within that site. Due to the proximity of the appeal site to No 170, I was able to clearly view the relationship between the two properties from the public realm and from within the appeal site, without the need to enter No 170. No party has therefore been prejudiced in the determination of this appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (i) the character and appearance of the host property and the street scene and (ii) on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 170 Stansted Road, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

5. The appeal building is a semi-detached, hipped roof two storey dwelling. It forms part of a group of three pairs of similarly designed properties, each of which have two storey flat roof rear projections. There is approximately 2

metre separation between the flank walls of the appeal property and No 170. The group is in an elevated position in relation to Stansted Road but separated from it by a mature landscape buffer.

6. The proposal would not exceed the height of the existing ridge line. However, the alteration from hipped roof to gable, with the addition of a full width, flat roof rear dormer, would result in a significant increase in the overall scale and bulk of the dwelling. The proposed alterations would unacceptably dominate the roofscape and the rear elevation of the property. Its form would be a prominent and incongruous feature, inconsistent with the host property and surrounding development. The use of composite weatherboarding to the gable end and the walls of the dormer would only increase the dominant effect of the proposal.
7. Notwithstanding the screening of the appeal building provided by the landscape buffer at the front of the site, it is possible to clearly see the group of dwellings from Cannons Close, opposite the site. Although the building line and front elevation would be unaltered, the alterations to the roof would be obvious in the street scene. The modest width of the appeal building, and its attached neighbour, would further highlight the resulting differences in the shared roofscape and the otherwise consistent roof form of the group.
8. The rear of the appeal building, and its wider group is similarly clearly visible from Orchard Road to the south. Therefore, although the effect would be localised in terms of views from outside of the site, the appeal proposal would nevertheless diminish the character and appearance of the host building, with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the street scene.
9. The gap between the appeal building and the flank wall of No 170 is limited. No 170 has two windows at first floor level within their flank wall, one of which is said to serve a bedroom. Whilst I recognise that the outlook from this window is already restricted and faces a similar window within the appeal building, some relief from this close relationship is provided by the hipped roof design of the dwellings, which opens up the space above the side elevations. Due to the combined depth and height of the proposed roof alterations in such close proximity to the first floor flank wall windows of No 170, the development proposed would be overbearing, and would lead to an unacceptable sense of enclosure to the occupiers of that property.
10. No concern has been raised by the Council with regard to the proposed single storey extension or the proposed extension to the existing two storey rear projection. Whilst I see no reason to reach a different conclusion in this respect, the acceptability of these elements of the proposal does not outweigh the harm already identified.
11. The appellant has drawn my attention to other developments within the vicinity of the appeal site which he considers offers support to the acceptability of the appeal scheme. However, from what I was able to see on my site visit, it is clear that these developments do not represent direct parallels to the appeal proposal. In addition to other differences in site characteristics, an example of a hipped to gable enlargement of a semi-detached property at Bishop Gray Rise did not appear to incorporate a flat roof dormer and was to a much larger dwelling, such that the differences in the roofscape of that building were not easily read together and were not obvious in the street scene. Similarly, an example within Orchard Road was not a full gable extension, part of the hip

remained, and no flat roof dormer was apparent from public view. I was unable to identify an example referred to by the appellant as 'within Parsonage Lane'. As such, I can only conclude that it is not prominent in the street scene, and thereby does not alter my conclusions with regard to the appeal proposal which I have necessarily considered on its own merits.

12. I have had regard to the appellant's desire to improve the living space, the acceptability of some elements of the proposal and the lack of objection to the proposal by statutory consultees, however these factors do not alter my decision.
13. In conclusion, I have found that the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host property and the street scene, and the living conditions of the occupiers of No 170 Stansted Road with regard to outlook. Thus, it would conflict with Policies DES4 and HOU11 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 and Policy HDP2 of the Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan for Silverleys and Meads Wards 2014. Together these policies require high quality design and protection of residential amenity.
14. The proposal also conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework where it seeks to ensure good design that is sympathetic to local character and developments that provide a high standard of amenity for existing users.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

S Tudhope
Inspector