



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 13 January 2021

by Chris Forreth MRTPI, DipTP, BSc(Hons)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/20/3259113

30 Willis Grove, Balls Park, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG13 8FH

- 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 J & L Woodley against the decision of East Herts District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/20/1205/HH, dated 29 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Green Belt

3. Paragraph 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) outlines the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The Framework, at paragraphs 145 and 146, set out the categories of development which may be regarded as not inappropriate in the Green Belt, subject to certain conditions.
4. Paragraph 145c) sets out that new buildings within the Green Belt are inappropriate unless any extension or alteration of a building is such that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It is common ground that the proposed extension would not result in a disproportionate addition to the original dwellinghouse, and I have no reason to disagree with that view.
5. For the above reasons the development would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would be consistent with Policy GBR1 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 (EHDP) and the aims and objectives of the Framework.

Character and appearance

6. The appeal property is located within a private gated development within the Balls Park estate. The appeal property itself is a mid-terraced dwelling which

- extends to a total of 7 properties. There is also a similar terrace on the opposite side of the driveway.
7. There is a clear synergy to the design concept to the overall housing development and the range of design features on the properties all complement each other. In terms of the appeal property terrace, to my mind, the most striking element at the rear is the first-floor covered balconies which provide a significant and distinctive feature.
 8. The proposal is for a modest single storey extension which would be around 1.23 metres deep by 2.1 metres wide. The extension would sit between the existing rear projection of the host dwelling and that of the neighbouring property. It would also include a matching parapet detail to the existing projection and the installation of bi-fold doors.
 9. From the evidence before me there have been various planning permissions granted by the Council which have involved alterations to some of the properties in Willis Grove. These have included rear extensions and fenestration changes including bi-fold doors. That said, none of these relate to the two terrace blocks either side of the access driveway.
 10. The Council has set out that this small addition would drastically change the rear aspect of the terrace. Whilst I accept that the proposal would result in the loss of the staggered rear aspect of the properties of the terrace, I find it significant that the most distinctive feature of the properties would remain. In my view, the principle of a small addition would not give rise to an unacceptable change to the shape and pattern of development at the rear of these terraced properties.
 11. However, the proposal involves alterations to include bi-fold doors which would extend almost to the full width of the rear aspect of the ground floor. This would also result in the removal of the matching pattern of French doors which is present across the wider terrace and would result in an unacceptable disruption to the fenestration of this row of properties.
 12. This is particularly the case given the width of the resultant opening and the increased height in glazing. This increased height also results in a revised soldier course above the doors and a smaller area of brickwork to the top of the parapet.
 13. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the extent of glazing would be seriously out of character with the host property and the wider terrace. In coming to the above view, I acknowledge that the proposal would not be visible from any public vantage point and would only be partially visible from the rear gardens of the adjoining properties. However, that does not mean that an otherwise unacceptable design should be permitted.
 14. In addition to the above, the appeal site is located close to Balls Park Mansion which is a Grade I Listed Building and immediately adjacent to the walls to the walled gardens which is a Grade II Listed Building. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of these buildings.
 15. The Council have considered that the proposal would not affect the setting of Balls Park Mansion or the walled garden. Given the nature of the proposal, I

also consider that it would not have any adverse impact on the setting of these listed buildings. As such, the proposal would accord with the heritage aims of the Framework and Policy HA7 of the EHDP. However, that does not outweigh the harm I have found.

16. For the above reasons the extension would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider terrace of properties and would conflict with Policies HOU11 and DES4 of the EHDP which amongst other matters seek to ensure that extensions are of a high standard of design, which are appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Chris Forrett

INSPECTOR