



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 23 March 2021

by R Sabu BA(Hons), BArch, MA, PgDip ARB RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/20/3264227

Land to the rear of No 2 Rectory Lane, Watton At Stone SG14 3SG

- 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 R Pearce against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/20/1381/FUL, dated 17 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of half of existing garage and erection of two-bedroom chalet bungalow with parking spaces.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The area surrounding the appeal site is characterised by dwellings with long rear gardens that give the area a pleasant spacious feel. The appeal site is currently undeveloped aside from an existing garage and is located between the rear of two existing gardens. It would be accessed via an existing sloping access road with single storey garages opposite. While the dwelling at No 2 Rectory Lane (No 2) has been extended, the extensions are single storey and sited close to the host building such that the spacious quality of the area is retained. There are a number of outbuildings within the neighbouring gardens, however, these are generally of a small scale such that they appear to be part of domestic garden paraphernalia and are in keeping with the spacious character of the area.
4. The proposal would introduce a dwelling with private amenity space that would be significantly smaller than that of the neighbouring properties. Therefore, while I note that the design has been amended following a previous application, the proposed dwelling would appear overly large for the size of the plot, harmfully departing from the prevailing spacious pattern of development.
5. While the area to the front of the dwelling would be somewhat restricted, it would be roughly similar in size to other properties in the area and this particular aspect of the scheme would therefore not cause an adverse effect on the character of the area.

6. However, the proposed dwelling would also have accommodation in the roof space such that its overall height would be significantly higher than the nearby garages. Given the slope of the access road, the site lies at a lower ground level than the properties in Rectory Lane and Glebe Close. As such, given the resulting views from across the rear gardens of neighbouring properties, this would further reduce the spaciousness of the area.
7. I acknowledge the comments of the Inspector for the case at Station Road. However, limited further details are such that I am unable to make a direct comparison with the appeal scheme in terms of character and appearance. In any event, each case must be determined on its individual merits.
8. Consequently, the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would conflict with Policies VILL1 and DES4 of the East Herts District Plan October 2018 which seeks, among other things development that would be in keeping with the character of the village and promote local distinctiveness.

Other Matters

9. I acknowledge concerns regarding the service provided by the Council, property value, precedent and an existing extension to No 2, However, I have necessarily determined the appeal based on its planning merits.
10. I note concerns regarding the demolition of the existing garage including asbestos and structure, access to the nearby garages, privacy and light to No 4 Rectory Lane. I also recognise that the proposal would contribute a dwelling to the local housing supply and the government's objective of significantly boosting housing supply including the associated social and economic benefits. Furthermore, I note the evidence regarding the accessibility of the location. In addition, the site is not within a designated area such as Green Belt or Conservation Area. However, since the contribution to housing supply would be limited and given the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area identified above, this matter has not altered my overall decision.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and in the absence of any material considerations to indicate otherwise it should be dismissed.

R Sabu

INSPECTOR