



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 July 2021

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 August 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/21/3272352

14 Elms Avenue, Great Shelford, Cambridge CB22 5LN

- 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 Cheung against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/04975/HFUL, dated 2 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a two storey front/side extension and single storey front extension to house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Shelford Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The property lies within the Great Shelford Conservation Area. The appellant refers to an appeal decision (APP/W0530/D/17/3187930) relating to 8 Elms Avenue which is close to the appeal site. The inspector described that the heritage significance of the conservation area relates to the historic core of the settlement focused around the approach to the crossing of the River Cam and also along the High Street with solidly built brick and slate roof villas and cottages along Woollards Lane and Tunwells Lane. It was concluded that changes to a property in Elms Avenue would be experienced in the context of the surrounding 1970's houses. This would similarly be the case with regard to this proposal. However, maintaining or enhancing the quality of the areas that make up the conservation area and form the setting to its historic core, is also important to the overall experience and significance of the conservation area.
 4. The proposal would result in extensions to this property. Given the character of the house; its location and setting; and the scale of alterations that have clearly been carried out to other properties in this cul-de-sac, the principle of extending and re-modelling the dwelling would not be unacceptable. The works proposed would add articulation to the front elevation, replace the front lean-to porch and incorporate improved window detailing.
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5. The house would become much more dominant in its plot. The considerable unrelieved bulk of the side elevation would not be a positive element of the design and despite the retained intervening vegetation, it would be more prominent in views from the head of the cul-de-sac and from the footpath to the side. The lack of an entrance feature together with the uniform and uninspiring proposed front elevation, particularly the long lean-to, would result in a building of uninspiring design quality when viewed from the front. The proposal would also result in hard standing across most of the frontage which would make a poor contribution to the street scene, particularly given the level of greenery that exists along this road.
6. Although the existing property is of modest design quality, it sits relatively unobtrusively within its grounds. The proposal would be more imposing and its design shortcomings more apparent. The design would not be of sufficient quality to justify the increased prominence. The open frontage and the lack of design quality would result in harm to the character and appearance of the immediate area and would represent poor design overall. It would be at odds with the design requirements of Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which remains consistent with the updated National Planning Policy Framework and can be afforded full weight.
7. Whilst this cul-de-sac makes only a modest contribution to the overall character and appearance of the conservation area, accepting poor design and eroding the landscape character of this street, would result in some, albeit limited harm, to the wider area. The harm would be less than substantial with regard to paragraph 202 of the Framework. In this respect, the proposal differs from the proposal at number 8, which was allowed at appeal, as it was not found to represent poor design. Whilst this proposal would provide increased and improved accommodation and would require significant investment to complete the works, the public benefits would not outweigh the harm to the conservation area as required by paragraph 202. Whilst my main concern relates to the design shortcomings and the conflict with Policy HQ/1, the proposal would also be at odds with the heritage requirements of Policy NH/14 and the Framework.
8. Overall, the material considerations that weigh in favour of the proposal are insufficient to outweigh my concerns. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR