
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 October 2021

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/21/3278502

1 Peters Wood Hill, Ware, SG12 9NR

- 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 Stephen McCollum against the decision of East Herts Council.
 - The application Ref 3/21/0785/HH, dated 24 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is ground floor rear extension, existing basement extension and conversion, new roof, new porch, internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. 1 Peters Wood Hill is a two storey detached house with a two storey rear extension and a basement set down from the road on a sloping site located in a prominent position at the entrance to a cul-de-sac. It is constructed of brick, with interlocking roof tiles. The immediate surroundings are characterised by houses similarly constructed predominantly of brick with tiled roofs and sharing some similarities in style and modest architectural detailing typical of the period of construction.
4. I consider that the relevant policies in this case include DES4 and HOU11 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 which require, among other things, that development proposals, including residential extensions, be of a high standard of design reflecting local distinctiveness and the scale, massing, building materials and design features of the surrounding area and the original dwelling, within the constraints of the site. These policies are consistent with the advice regarding high standards of design in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework).
5. The proposal includes a number of extensions and external and internal alterations to modernise the living accommodation within the house. The size and form of the proposals at the rear of the house are dictated partly by the significant fall in ground levels across the site both from west (the road) to east and from south to north.

6. I consider that the size and scale of the proposed extensions to the rear are acceptable in form and massing in the context of the overall size and characteristics of the site. I also find the proposed increase in height of the lower, northern part of the house to be relatively modest and in proportion with and subordinate to the other part of the house. It reflects the roof pitch of the latter.
7. I consider that the proposed extensive use of zinc cladding is out of keeping with the character and appearance of the existing house itself and the wider area. I accept that the architectural character of the area is modest in its form and detailing and that the introduction of modern materials is not necessarily unacceptable. However, the houses in the street have some local distinctiveness in the cohesive impact of the predominance of brick and tiles as building materials. The proposed large area of zinc for the roof and the front porch would contrast starkly with this pattern of development and appear incongruous in this prominent and highly visible position at the entrance to the cul-de-sac.
8. The appellant has drawn my attention to examples nearby where zinc cladding has been used. In these cases it has been used on dormer windows to the rear of the property and is not readily visible or prominent in public viewpoints. The dark brown colour and small amount of surface area involved helps it to blend in with the overall appearance of the buildings. By contrast, the proposal would result in a large area of a material, which, notwithstanding its colour, would appear out of keeping with both the existing house and the surrounding area.
9. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the existing house and the surrounding area, contrary to policies DES4 and HOU11.
10. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR