



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 December 2021

by P. D. Biggers BSc Hons MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/D/21/3282955
4 Mill Road, Henham, Essex CM22 6AB.

- 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 Matthew Kingsbury against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application UTT/21/1600/HHF, dated 8 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is two storey rear/side extensions, single storey front/rear extensions and gravel to front garden area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Although the decision notice gives three reasons for refusal, the way they are worded, all three relate to one main issue i.e. the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings on Mill Road.

Reasons

3. The appeal site sits on the north side of Mill Road which is characterised by two storey, semi-detached dwellings faced in render under tile roofs. The frontages to the houses have a degree of uniformity by virtue of the prominent gable detailing, lean-to front porches and the use of standardised materials.
4. It was apparent from my site visit that the original form of these semi-detached houses would have been similar to the form of Nos 18 and 20 which appear to be the only pairing largely unchanged, certainly on the frontage. Other semi-detached pairings have all been extended to varying degrees many of them with side extensions.
5. The appeal proposal is made up of three elements a two storey side and rear extension, a single storey front extension and a single storey rear extension. I will consider each of these in turn in terms of their impacts on character and appearance.
6. The two storey side and rear extension would be a very substantial addition to the property the detailing of which, particularly in respect of the side extension, would be poor and which would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the original property viewed from Mill Road. The appeal proposal is a resubmission of an earlier scheme where the side extension had a gabled end and this has been changed to a hip in the interest of reducing any impact of the side extension on the occupants of No 6. However, there are no hip roofs in

evidence along this side of Mill Road visible from the street and the extension at roof level would look highly incongruous. Moreover, although the side extension would be set well back from the frontage it proposes to adopt the same ridge height as the main house, different roof pitch and eaves level to the main house, inconsistent dormer detailing and proposes cedar cladding as a walling material which is not present anywhere on the frontage. The result would be a side extension that would not be sufficiently subservient to the main house and would appear out of keeping with the character and appearance of the house and frontage.

7. It has been put to me that the side extension would close down the openness between the properties and contribute to a terracing effect in the street scene. However, from my observations on site I am not persuaded this would be the case, largely as a result of the substantial set-back. In any event many of the side extensions already added to the properties on this side of Mill Road have had a far greater terracing effect than would be the case with the set-back proposal and it is fair to say that the original open character that may have existed between the semi-detached pairs has been significantly reduced as a result of side extensions. Notwithstanding the fact that the principle of a side extension could be acceptable the detail of this particular proposal would be detrimental to character and appearance.
8. In addition, the detailing of the rear gabled extension would result in an incongruous and awkward relationship with the existing rear gable on the property. Again, different eaves levels and shallower roof pitches would be adopted for the rear extension which appear to be unnecessary variations and which would make the roof line appear awkward and unsightly.
9. Without addressing the shortcomings in the design of the side and rear extensions to result in extensions that would appear more in keeping with the character and appearance of the original property viewed from front and rear and a better relationship to the character of the original property the appeal proposal would be unacceptable.
10. The front extension would comprise a full-width lean-to addition to the front of the property with a gabled porch detail projecting forward. Nos 2-8 Mill Road have a relatively consistent front building line at present and the proposed extension would project forward of this and appear as an intrusive element on a fairly uniform frontage. Only the semi-detached pair at Nos 10-12 Mill Road has a similar form of front extension in this run of similarly designed properties and that front extension serves to demonstrate the disruptive effect the proposed extension to No 4 would have on the largely uniform character and appearance of the Mill Road frontage.
11. Regarding the single storey rear extension, the proposal infills the section of the ground floor closest to the plot boundary and being single storey ensures there would be no impact for the neighbouring occupants at No 2. Given the flat-fronted gabled design of the two storey rear and side extension however the proposed front pitch to the otherwise flat roof would appear somewhat out of keeping with the rest of the proposed rear elevation. Otherwise, however, this element of the proposal would be acceptable.
12. The *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) at paragraph 130 requires that developments must be sympathetic to local character to create high quality buildings and spaces amongst other things and at paragraph 134 that development that is not well designed should be refused. Policy S3 of the *Uttlesford Local Plan* (ULP) applies to all settlements with defined development

limits, including Henham, and reflects the Framework in requiring development to be compatible with the settlement's character and countryside setting. In addition, ULP Policy GEN2 in requiring development to be compatible with the scale, form, layout and appearance and materials of its surroundings amongst other things and Policy H8 on extensions requiring extensions to be in scale with the original building are consistent with the Framework and, for the reasons above, the proposal would conflict with them.

13. The Council, in order to assist householders in designing house extensions and alterations has prepared the *Householder Extension Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD). The SPD stresses the importance of size, scale and form for any extension and for the reasons above I am not satisfied that due regard has been paid to these aspects in the proposal. Taken together the proposed extensions to the property would be disproportionate to the size, scale and form of the original building and detrimental to its character and appearance as a result of poor design and would therefore be in conflict with ULP policies, the Framework and the SPD.

Other Matters

14. Notwithstanding the fact that the Council has not sought to refuse the application specifically on the grounds of impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, I am not persuaded that the set-back and depth of the side and rear extension would not have some detrimental impact on the patio area to No 6 as a result of its proximity and height. Even if I was to agree, however, that living conditions would not be impacted, this would be insufficient to outweigh the detrimental impact in respect of character and appearance.
15. I understand the appellant's wish to achieve additional family accommodation in the extensions and in that way make sustainable and effective use of housing land, an objective which is encouraged by the Framework in Section 11. However, paragraph 124 in the same section of the Framework states that this should not be at the expense of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting. As such, sustainable and effective use of the dwelling would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the original dwelling and Mill Road as a result of the proposal.

Conclusion

16. In reaching my decision I have had regard to the matters before me and for the reasons above the appeal should be dismissed.

P. D. Biggers

INSPECTOR