



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2021

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J1860/D/21/3278846

**Redgables, Cotheridge Court to Church Lane, Cotheridge, Worcester
WR6 5LZ**

- 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 Chris Grantham against the decision of Malvern Hills District Council.
- The application Ref 21/00510/HP, dated 12 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 June 2021.
- The development proposed is described as 'Two storey side extension; single storey rear extension; raising of existing ridge line and alterations to the external appearance.'

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side extension; single storey rear extension; raising of existing ridge line and alterations to the external appearance at Redgables, Cotheridge Court to Church Lane, Cotheridge, Worcester WR6 5LZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00510/HP, dated 15 March 2021, and the plans submitted with it subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings: 21-530-1; 21-530-2; 21-530-3; and 21-530-4.
 - 3) Notwithstanding the details shown on the submitted plans, no development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the application was determined, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 20 July 2021. It officially replaces the previous version published in February 2019. However, as any policies that are material to this decision have not fundamentally changed in the Framework, I am satisfied that this has not prejudiced any party and I have had regard to the latest version in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a detached two-storey, brick and tile dwelling. The property itself is, by the appellant's own admission, a non-descript mid-20th century dwelling. It has a prominent projecting gable feature to the front with a steep pitched roof. Whilst the property roof is broadly steeply pitched, it has a hipped element to the side/rear. To the side of the dwelling is a detached double garage and a separate outbuilding, which I am informed is an ancillary home office. The property is set back from the road with a spacious driveway in front, with ample space for the parking and turning of vehicles.
5. The property is located in a rural setting within its own spacious private garden, as are the other dispersed dwellings along the lane. These are of varied styles, sizes and ages, although broadly of traditional design and materials, such that there is not a uniform street scene. The neighbouring dwellings either side of the appeal property are a substantial distance away from the property and its site boundaries adding to the prevailing spacious character. Whilst there is some fencing along the front garden boundary with the lane, this frontage is relatively open such that the property is already visible on approach and when passing. The property is approximately equidistant between the Grade II listed St Leonard's Church and the Grade II* listed Cotheridge Court.
6. The proposal involves the erection of a two-storey side extension, a single-storey rear extension, raising the roof and eaves of the existing building by about 0.45 metres and remodelling the external appearance of the entire dwelling with new fenestration and new facing materials to include the addition of blue brick, render and timber cladding.
7. The existing property is already asymmetrical in its design and appearance, including the front elevation, and there is no requirement to create a symmetrical frontage or property. The width of the proposed two-storey side extension would be wider than the existing two-storey element the other side of the front projecting gable. However, it would also be set back from the projecting front gable and would be narrower than it. The roof of the extension would also be set down a little lower from the projecting gable and raised roof on the host dwelling.
8. 'Design breaks' such as these are fairly common mechanisms to ensure extensions remain visually subservient to the host dwelling, and are included in the South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Overarching Principles (the 'Design SPD'). As front extensions can be prominent, the Design SPD advises that they require a particularly sensitive design which relates in scale and size to the existing dwelling, should have a positive impact on the street, and should be proportionate to the front elevation of the host dwelling. The Design SPD is general in its nature to deal with the wide range of properties and extensions, so its guidance has to be applied appropriately taking account of the property to be extended and its surroundings.

9. The gabled roofs at the rear of the property appear to meet, when looking at the submitted plans. However, the gable of the two-storey extension would project out beyond the central gable added to the rear of the house. Hence, the apparent awkward juxtaposition shown on a two-dimensional plan would not occur to the same extent when built. As a result they would not be visually prominent or harmful to the dwelling or the area when viewed from the public right of way some 80 metres away. In my view this would not amount to such poor design to warrant refusal.
10. Whilst the roof would be raised to facilitate the provision of two en-suite bedrooms in the newly created roof space, the property would remain two-storeys at eaves level, as are the neighbouring properties. The property is set in spacious grounds and also set a substantial distance away from the dwellings either side. Due to the orientation of the properties to each other and the lane, and the intervening landscaping along the lane and between the plots, there is no discernible building line or street scene to create a 'row' of properties. Consequently, the proposed increase in the height of the roof and dwelling would not be read directly alongside the neighbouring properties as to disrupt any particular character and appearance to the area.
11. The property is already fairly prominent in the lane as much of the front garden boundary has been removed revealing the entire front elevation and the large driveway. I have no doubt that the proposed extensions and the use of a mixed palette of materials and new fenestration would create a different looking and contemporary-styled dwelling. However, the proposed external facing treatments to be applied to the entire property would unite the proposed extensions with the existing dwelling, such that the remodelled dwelling would not adversely detract from the character and appearance of the area.
12. To conclude, I find the various factors described above would combine to ensure that the overall scale and massing of the extensions would be sufficiently subservient. In particular, on the principal elevation the proposed two-storey extension would remain subordinate and the existing projecting front gable, with its proposed feature windows, would remain the visually dominant feature, as it is currently. The unifying remodelling and re-facing of the entire property would ensure that the proposed development would not adversely harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area.
13. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with Policy SWDP21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan and Policy P2 of the Broadwas & Cotheridge Neighbourhood Plan. These collectively seek to ensure that development complements the character of the area and that the scale, height and massing should be appropriate to the setting of the site, and that in particular that house extensions are subordinate to, and do not dominate, the character and appearance of the original dwelling. It would also accord with the general design guidance in the Design SPD as already outlined above.

Other Matters

14. The Council is satisfied that the contemporary design and materials used would not adversely affect the setting of either the Grade II listed St Leonard's Church and the Grade II* Cotheridge Court. Having special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of these listed buildings, from the evidence

before me and my observations on site, I see no reason to take a different view. Therefore I do not consider this to be a main issue.

Conditions

15. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council against the advice in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. The appellant has not raised any objection to them.
16. There is the standard condition which limits the lifespan of the planning permission and one that lists the approved plans to provide certainty.
17. The Council raises no concern about the palette of facing materials. However, the application form merely lists blue brick, render and timber cladding and the submitted plans indicate the same. These materials can come in a variety of colours and types. Therefore, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area it is necessary to impose a materials condition requiring submission of samples for approval.
18. The Highway Authority suggests a condition that an area is laid out within the curtilage of the dwelling for the parking of 3 cars. However the Council advises there is ample on-site parking in front of the dwelling, and I saw this to be the case. Furthermore, the proposed extensions would not encroach onto the existing parking area and there is an existing double garage. Therefore such a condition is not necessary.
19. The ecology condition requires the mitigation measures set out in the Elite Ecology report to be implemented. The report appears to have been carried out for the previous planning application as it contains site plans showing the design of the previous scheme. Nonetheless, the existing building and the facts about it remain the same. The survey found the existing building currently has negligible impacts on bird nesting and bat roosts and concludes that there are no compulsory recommendations. Whilst the recommended enhancement measures are laudable they are not necessary or directly relevant to make the development acceptable. Hence, the condition is not necessary.
20. A Water Management Statement (WMS) was submitted that confirms surface water from the extensions will be directed to an existing soakaway. The proposals are for extensions to an existing property and the WMS states there will be no adverse impact on flooding or surface water drainage as a result. Therefore the drainage condition is not necessary.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed with conditions.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR