
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4TH April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/22/3292490

3 Epping Green, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7JP

- 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 and Mrs Knight against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03708/FHA, dated 26 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a rear single storey extension, garage extension and front second floor extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the erection of a front second floor extension. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a rear single storey extension, garage extension at 3 Epping Green, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7JP in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 21/03708/FHA, dated 26 September 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) That part of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Refs 210701/P/100, 210701/P/101, 210701/P/102 (Block Plan at a scale of 1/1250) and 210701/P/102 (Block Plan at a scale of 1/500).
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main issue

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

Reasons

3. The Council appears to raise no objection to the new single storey rear addition or to the proposed garage extension. I, too, find these elements of the appeal scheme acceptable because they would be modest in scale, height and depth, and appropriate in design and general appearance. Both of these extensions would respect the character and appearance of the host building and other

properties nearby. Consequently, I shall focus on the proposed first floor extension at the front of the main house.

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached house with first floor accommodation partly served by a flat roof dormer, which extends across the front roof slope of the pair. Like its attached counterpart, No 3 has a ground floor porch that projects forward of the main front wall. The appeal dwelling stands within a short line of similar properties that address the same side of Epping Green. Despite some changes to the properties in this row, they all retain the dormer and a ground floor forward projection at the front. When seen from the adjacent highway, the broadly consistent roof profile of this grouping and their stepped front elevations establishes a broad consistency and a noticeable rhythm to existing development, which is locally distinctive.
5. I saw considerable variety to the scale and appearance of existing buildings in the wider residential estate, to which the appellants have referred and provided photographs and some background details. However, it is within the short row of similar dwellings along the same side of Epping Green that No 3 and the completed dwelling would be mainly visually 'read'.
6. The proposed front extension would result in a 2-storey forward projection with a dual pitched roof and a gable facing the road. It would project no further forward than the existing building and the apex of the new gable would be set below the main ridgeline. Nevertheless, the proposal would be a sizeable addition with the new front elevation perceived as more substantial in-built form than the dwellings on either side. The new 2-storey gable would be a significant and conspicuous feature of the new front elevation that would also differentiate the completed dwelling from others in the same row. Taken together, I consider that the marked contrast in the scale and design of the finished dwelling compared to others in the same row would cause No 3 to stand uncomfortably in the local street scene.
7. By unduly disrupting the distinctive pattern of existing development along this section of Epping Green, the proposal would be obtrusive in the streetscape and detrimental to the area's visual character. In reaching this conclusion, I acknowledge that the proposed external materials would match those of the existing building. I also note that the site is not within a conservation area nor is No 3 a listed building.
8. I have carefully considered the examples to which the appellants have referred, which show several properties that have been externally altered and extended in ways that are similar to the proposal. To reiterate, it is the specific relationship of the proposal with the host building and adjacent properties and the consequences for the local street scene that is objectionable in this case. None of the cases cited fall within the same grouping as No 3 and in some instances, the examples given demonstrate the identified harm. As such, these examples do not lend support to the appellants' case. In any event, each proposal should be assessed on its own merits, as I have done.
9. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed first floor extension would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Council's Core Strategy 2006-2031 and Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011. These policies seek to ensure that development integrates with the streetscape character; harmonises with the original design and character of the house; and

respects adjoining properties in terms of layout, scale and bulk. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that developments should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.

10. As the proposed rear and garage extensions would be consistent with the character and appearance of the host building and the local area, they would comply with the policies cited by the Council. These elements of the proposal are clearly severable to the proposed front extension and so I am able to issue a split decision that grants planning permission solely for them.

Conditions

11. I have attached a condition requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for certainty. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, a condition is also required to ensure that the external materials of the extensions match those of the existing building.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed in part and allowed in part.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR