



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2022

by Rebecca Thomas MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/21/3284927

3 Bradcote, Moor Green, Ardeley, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 7AT

- 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 Goldings Estates Ltd (Eugene Flannery) against the decision of East Herts Council.
 - The application Ref 3/21/1462/HH, dated 28 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is Demolition of single storey rear extension. Erection of a two storey side extension, single and two storey rear extension and insertion of a window to front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the Moor Green Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached property located in a rural area. The house is part of a small group of similar post-war properties, featuring hipped gables, rendered walls and set in well-sized plots with parking and garden space to the frontages. The appeal site appears to have minimal alterations, whilst the attached neighbour has been extended with a two-storey hipped gable extension to the side. With the exception of the adjoining neighbour, the houses in this row of similar properties do not have significant alterations or extensions. This small group of properties are set in plots with generous space between the pairs of dwellings, and this combined with the set back from the roadside and large rear gardens, results in a spacious and open character in this rural area. In addition to this, the minimal alterations contribute to the relatively uniform appearance, reflecting the original character of the dwellings.
4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in the exercise of the statutory duty, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

5. The proposed development would introduce a side extension which would be set below the ridge of the original dwelling and set back from the existing elevation. The proposal would introduce a covered porch and entrance to the front elevation, which would be gabled to the end, with a link to the original roof. The gabled two-storey element would extend along the side of the dwelling and the plot for approximately 14.8m. The extension would make use of most of the plot width as seen from the road, extending the dwelling close to its boundary.
6. Whilst I acknowledge that the proposed extension would be reduced in height and set back from the front elevation, the development represents a significant and bulky addition to the house and the plot, with additions which depart from the original appearance and character of the original. The extent of the proposed development across the width of the plot, combined with its height, and length of the gabled extension along the side elevation would significantly diminish the original character of the dwelling, being at odds with the original dwelling and significantly unbalancing the existing pair of dwellings. Whilst the appellant considers that the appeal site is of little design merit, nonetheless the development as proposed would result in harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and its setting within this small group of buildings and within the CA. I therefore find that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and its significance as a designated heritage asset.
7. I consider that the harm to the CA would be localised, and in respect of the significance of the designated heritage asset as a whole, less than substantial harm would result. Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) requires that such harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
8. The appellant states that the existing house is not of adequate size to support modern larger family living. In addition, the proposal would upgrade, enlarge and modernise the property and would improve the heating and insulation standards, make it more energy efficient, improve sustainability and make it suitable for modern family living. I do not have any evidence to substantiate that the dwelling as it currently stands is substandard for family living, and even so, the benefits of any additional space would be principally of private benefit. Although I recognise that improvements to the efficiency and the use of low carbon heat sources would be a positive aspect, I am not persuaded that this would only be possible through the development proposed. Consequently, I find that there are no public benefits that would outweigh the harm that would be caused to the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset.
9. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. There would be conflict with Policy HA4 of the District Plan¹, which expects that (amongst other things) extensions to existing buildings preserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the area, including being complementary and sympathetic to the parent building. There would also be conflict with Policies DES4 and HOU11 of the District Plan which expect new development to be of high standard of design and layout to reflect and promote local distinctiveness, to be of size,

¹ East Herts District Plan (October 2018)

scale, mass form, siting and design appropriate to the character appearance and setting of the existing dwelling and surrounding area. There would also be conflict with Sections 12 and 16 of the Framework, relating to design and the historic environment.

10. The appellant refers to a number of other paragraphs within the Framework, stating that these relate to the appeal proposal. For the reasons set out above, I find that the appeal proposals conflict with the District Plan and Sections 12 and 16 of the Framework and I do not consider that the paragraphs referred to by the appellant support the proposal.

Other Matters

11. I note that there have been no objections from neighbours. Nonetheless, each appeal must be determined on its own merits and this alone is not sufficient to overcome the harm identified.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole and all other relevant material consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rebecca Thomas

INSPECTOR