



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 May 2022

by **P. D. Biggers** BSc Hons MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21ST June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/V0510/D/22/3297417

8A Perry Close, Haddenham, Ely CB6 3SU.

- 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 Woodhouse against the decision of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application 22/00070/FUL, dated 28 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is first floor front extension to house.
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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 its surroundings on Perry Close and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site sits at the west end of the cul-de-sac Perry Close. The Close is developed with two storey semi-detached houses in brick under a mixture of hipped and gabled, tiled roofs.
4. No 8a appears to be an infill development on a plot of land adjacent to No 8 and extends up to the eastern boundary and close to the southern boundary. A public footpath heads south out of the turning head of Perry Close along the eastern plot boundary and then turns west along its southern boundary linking through to Camping Close.
5. No 8A has what is essentially a single storey offshoot to the front accommodating the property's garage and utility room and lying adjacent to the footpath. This would be extended upwards to accommodate an enlarged third bedroom and ensuite shower room and WC.
6. The total height to the ridge would be about 6.9 metres and although I acknowledge that the mass of the roof has been reduced over the initial scheme by the introduction of a hipped roof, it would appear that the proposed height of the ridge has increased. Moreover, I am not satisfied that the introduction of the hipped roof in what is otherwise a simply designed, gable-ended house would result in an appropriate design. It has been put to me that there is a mix of hipped and gabled roofs in Perry Close and, whilst I acknowledge this is the case, with different roof forms on alternating semi-detached pairs of properties, none of the houses have mixed roof styles on the same building as is proposed on No 8A.

7. The effect of the construction of a first floor over the front extension, even though this would be set back from the Perry Close turning head, would appear dominant, disproportionate and not sufficiently subordinate to the main house. It would further reduce the remaining openness at the Close end, accentuating what already appears as a development at odds with the development pattern of the rest of Perry Close.
8. Moreover, the proposed front extension would be dominant and overbearing for users walking on the public footpath which the extension would immediately adjoin. Whilst it has been put to me that the footpath is not well used, the enclosing effect of the proposal would effectively make the path even less attractive to users, particularly at night. One element of good design is to promote permeability and safe pedestrian access within our residential environments and a proposed extension which would change the attractiveness of the footpath in the way proposed would not be acceptable.
9. The Council, to assist householders in the design of residential development, including extensions, has prepared the *East Cambridgeshire District Council Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD) to guide development and ensure good design. It advises that extensions should not be dictated by a desire for a particular amount of additional floor space and that the form and proportions of the original dwelling will determine the extent to which it can be extended. The proposed design would not satisfactorily respond to the form and proportions of the host dwelling and as such would not meet the design guide.
10. 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 in these respects the proposal fails. Policy ENV2 of the *East Cambridgeshire Local Plan* (ECLP) reflects the Framework in requiring development to be of the highest architectural quality and to respond to local character and to ensure that the layout, scale, form and massing of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area amongst other things. The emerging *Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan* although not yet 'made' is at an advanced stage and has been submitted for independent examination and Policy HAD13 similarly requires development design to respect the character, scale and density of the locality and create a high quality environment. For the above reasons, i.e. the positioning, scale, mass and form of the extension, the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the established character and appearance of the area contrary to these policies.

Other Matters

11. I have had regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. I understand the appellants' wish to achieve additional accommodation through the extension to allow additional bedroom space to assist in providing specialist care for their son and improving the usability of the house. In that way I acknowledge they would be making 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 and, notwithstanding the personal circumstances which could be accommodated by a more acceptable design, sustainable and effective use of the dwelling would not, of itself, outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the house and its surroundings including the public footpath.

12. I note the appellants' point that the neighbouring occupiers are very happy with the proposal but there are no letters of support before me and in any event the absence of objections does not necessarily mean that there would be no harm from the proposal and that it would be acceptable.

Conclusion

13. 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