

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 June 2022

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6TH July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/22/3298924

28 Fordwich Hill, Hertford, SG14 2BQ

- 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 R Smith against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/22/0059/HH, dated 12 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey rear and side extension and first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two-storey rear and side extension and first floor rear extension at 28 Fordwich Hill, Hertford, SG14 2BQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/22/0059/HH, dated 12 January 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drg No NH/962/01, NH/962/02, NH/962/03, NH/962/04, NH/962/05 and NH/962/06.
 - 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 proposal on the character and appearance of 28 Fordwich Hill and the wider street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling (not detached as stated within the Council's planning officer's report) and sits within a sub-urban residential cul-de-sac comprising detached and semi-detached properties of

similar age but with mixed appearances, many having been extended or altered in a variety of ways beyond their original forms.

4. The proposal comprises two parts. The Council has no objection to a first-floor rear extension that is proposed immediately adjoining the attached neighbouring property at No 26. I have no reason to disagree as it would merely project an existing rear facing gable deeper and mimic a similar extension to the attached property.
5. The second part of the proposal would replace an existing two-storey hipped roof projection that spans the outside part of the property's rear elevation with a deeper two-storey extension which would extend sideways and wrap around part of the dwelling's side elevation. The side projection would be recessed behind the property's front elevation by around 4.2m with its flank set away from the side boundary with No 30 by around 1m. It would have a hipped roof facing Fordwich Hill and an eaves height slightly lower than the two-storey eaves height to the side of the original dwelling.
6. Part (b) of Policy HOU11 *Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings, Residential Outbuildings and Works Within Residential Curtilages* of the East Herts District Plan 2018 (EHDP) states that side extensions at first floor level or above should ensure appropriate space is left between the flank wall of the extension and the common curtilage with a neighbouring property and that as a general rule a space of 1m will be the minimum acceptable in order to safeguard the character and appearance of the street scene and prevent a visually damaging 'terracing' effect. The appeal proposal would achieve the minimum separation that is required by Policy HOU11. Moreover, although No 30 is built right up to the common side boundary, I saw that this degree of spacing would reflect the separation distances between many other properties along the length of both sides to Fordwich Hill, in some instances those gaps appearing to be original and in others where properties have been extended to the sides. The side extension would not appear cramped within the street scene, despite the eaves' overhangs of both properties, which I accept would narrow the gap to a degree when seen at that level, but not in a form that would be alien to the locality, or which I find would be visually harmful.
7. I recognise that there would be variation between the eaves and first floor window heights of the extension when compared with the original property. However, this is as a consequence of keeping the side extension appropriately subservient, and given its deep recess, I am not persuaded that this would appear incongruous or poorly related to the existing when viewed from Fordwich Hill. I therefore find no conflict with part (a) of Policy HOU11 insofar as it requires extensions to be appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the existing dwelling and/or the surrounding area, and for them to generally appear subservient to the dwelling.
8. Overall, I am satisfied that the extensions would display the standard of design necessary to respect the character of the existing dwelling and the wider street scene. As such there would be no conflict with the overall requirements of Policy HOU11 or with EHDP Policy DES4 *Design of Development* which requires all development to be of a high standard of design and layout to reflect and promote local distinctiveness.

Conditions

9. A condition specifying the relevant plans is necessary as this provides certainty. In the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to ensure that the proposal is finished with materials that would match the existing.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, and in the absence of any other conflict with the development plan, the appeal is allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR