
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 July 2022

by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F3545/D/22/3294626

Northwood, Westley Lane, Horringer IP29 5RZ

- 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 Simon Allen against the decision of West Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/21/2093/HH, dated 18 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is extensions and alterations and construction of a detached garage with annex above.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for extensions and alterations and construction of a detached garage at Northwood, Westley Lane, Horringer IP29 5RZ. The permission is granted in accordance with the terms of the application Ref DC/21/2093/HH, dated 18 October 2021, 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: 02 (location plan), 1407 01C (floor plans), 1407 02C (elevations), 1407 03C (elevations), 1407 04C (garage), 1407 05C (block/roof plan) and 1407 06C (block/roof plan).

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal form includes an alternative description to the original one, which provides more detail as follows: 'Householder planning application - a. front porch b. single storey front infill extension c. two storey side and rear extension following demolition of existing utility and garage d. raising of roof to create first floor extension with dormer window to rear elevation e. alterations to fenestration f. detached garage/garden store with annexe above'.
3. While both the original and alternative descriptions of development refer to an annexe above the garage, the appellant indicates that this was removed from the overall proposal. This amendment is reflected on the plan showing the garage, which was considered by the Council in reaching its decision¹. I have,

¹ Ref 1407 04C.

therefore, considered the appeal on the same basis and reference to the annexe is omitted from the decision paragraph above.

Main Issue

4. The Council does not raise any concerns about the front porch, single storey front infill extension or the garage. Consequently, the main issue is the effect of the two storey side and rear extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. Northwood is a detached bungalow located at the northern end of a linear layout of detached dwellings along the western side of Westley Lane. Except for two cottages further north on the other side of the road, the immediately surrounding area is open countryside.
6. Policy DM2 of the Council's Joint Development Management Policies Document (2015) concerns development principles and local distinctiveness, and includes the requirement that development should maintain or create a sense of place and/or local character. Policy DM24 of the same document addresses alterations or extensions to existing dwellings. It says that such development will be permitted provided that it will respect the character, scale and design of existing dwellings, and the character and appearance of the immediate and surrounding area; and will not result in over-development of the dwelling curtilage. Policy CS3 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy (2010), concerning design and local distinctiveness, requires that development proposals must create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.
7. The existing dwelling has a relatively large footprint but is of modest height. The proposed extensions would add to the footprint to a limited extent, while the principal change would be to the height of the building. The two storey elements would result in a substantially larger building of greater bulk and mass. However, while not unattractive, the existing bungalow has little architectural merit in its own right and the drawings show that the proposed extensions would result in a proportionate and well-designed dwelling. As such, despite the material changes involved the proposal not have a harmful effect on the existing dwelling's character and appearance. Moreover, the appeal property is set within a generous plot where the proposed alterations would not result in an overdevelopment of the curtilage or otherwise appear incongruous in the immediate setting.
8. The nearest dwellings on the same side of Westley Lane are of individual design and appearance. However, the two immediately south of the appeal site, 'The Briars' and 'Keswick End', share some characteristics, notably the prominent front gables, one and half storey height and overall size. While the appeal proposal includes some more contemporary features, particularly the fenestration, it would similarly include front gable features. While it would appear to be of greater height than the immediately neighbouring dwellings there are examples of two storey dwellings near the appeal site. Consequently, the extended dwelling would not be uncharacteristic or incongruous within the street scene.

9. It follows from this that the public visibility of the dwelling should not weigh against the proposal. In any case, while the dwelling would be visible from the road frontage other public views of it would be limited. To the rear is agricultural fields and woodland, while side views of the dwelling approaching from the north would be screened by the mature trees to the site's northern boundary. There is no basis to suggest that these would not continue to be an effective long-term screen, marking the transition from built development to countryside at the settlement edge.
10. Accordingly, for the above reasons, I conclude that the two storey side and rear extensions would not have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. As such, there is no conflict with Policies DM2 and DM24 of the Joint Development Management Policies Document or with Policy CS3 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy, as described above. It is also not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which promotes good design.

Conclusion and Conditions

11. I have found in the appellant's favour with regard to the main issue and, therefore, the appeal should succeed. Of the Council's suggested conditions I have imposed the standard time condition and, to ensure the proper implementation of the proposal, one requiring development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR