
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 September 2022

by Richard Aston BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18TH October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/22/3298887

Cavehall Cottage, Wyddial, Hertfordshire SG9 0ER

- 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 Ms Kirstie Adams against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/22/0391/HH, dated 22 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is rear first floor extension to provide additional bedroom and accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for rear first floor extension to provide additional bedroom and accommodation at Cavehall Cottage, Wyddial, Hertfordshire SG9 0ER in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/22/0391/HH, dated 22 April 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: FGF PL 01 and FGF PL 02 Rev C.
 - 3) No development shall commence until details of the external materials have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority (including timber cladding, slate, fenestration and rainwater goods). Thereafter the works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details and the development shall be maintained as approved.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and area.

Reasons

3. The host property is a detached two storey dwelling located in a rural area and constructed from brick under a slate tiled roof with its principal elevation close to Vicarage Road. The property benefits from an existing double storey rear gable extension set on top of a single storey rendered extension spanning the full width of the rear elevation.

4. In this case there is no doubt that the size and scale proposed would cumulatively result in significant extensions and alterations to the original property. This includes from a pair of large outbuildings within close proximity to the dwelling¹. That said there is no size limit imposed by the development plan policies before me and this is a rural property set within large grounds and surrounded by open agricultural fields, trees and in an area of similar rural properties.
5. The first floor gables have been designed to sit below the base of the existing chimney and their depth would be no greater than the existing gable. The depth would also not be as 'wide' as the flank of the main dwelling and the scale, form and mass would appear as a less important addition and therefore subservient. Visually, from the prominent approach down the hill from the west I observed that the existing view to the rear of the dwelling was of the rendered side wall and roof of the existing rear first floor extension. This would be replaced by a more sympathetic view of slate roof and timber cladding, the details of which could be agreed by condition. Such materials would be entirely reflective of local distinctiveness and character and the cladding would help to visually distinguish the extension from the main building.
6. The rear floor to ceiling windows whilst undoubtedly a requirement of more contemporary living standards are not entirely uncharacteristic of such detached rural properties, are appropriately scaled and would not appear visually incongruous. Any views of the glazing and the gable projections from the closest footpath to the rear would be across a large agricultural field and with the roof of the dwelling in the background. As such the eye would not be unacceptably drawn to the proposal from its rural surroundings.
7. These judgements involve a degree of subjectivity and although I acknowledge the council's concerns that the proposal would result in large cumulative extensions, overall there would be no significant or materially harmful impact from that increase in any public views. There would be no harmful or unacceptable erosion of the character or appearance of this rural property, its rural setting or the agrarian landscape within which it sits.
8. For these reasons, the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property or the area. It would not conflict with Policies GBR2, HOU11 and DES4 of the East Hertfordshire District Plan 2018 which, when taken as a whole and amongst other things require such development to be of a high standard of design, that extensions are appropriate to the character and appearance and setting of the site and/or surrounding area in terms of a number of typical design considerations, reflect local distinctiveness and are generally subservient to the dwelling.

Other Matters

9. The Council's delegated report appears to question the lawfulness of the existing extensions I have referred to above and in the footnote below. However, no substantive details are provided as to the significance of this for the appeal and within the context of a Householder appeal it is not within my remit to determine whether such development is lawful. Given the nature of the proposal before me and amongst other considerations, this would be a matter solely between the council and the appellant to address. On the

¹ LPA ref: 3/16/1010/HH, 3/16/0949/PNHH and 3/16/0122/HH.

evidence before me I see no reason why it should affect my determination of this appeal or in this particular case, be a consideration that should prevent me allowing the appeal and granting planning permission. I have not therefore considered it necessary to have regard to it any further.

Conclusion

10. The proposal would be in accordance with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework which indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with it.
11. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council. Aside from the standard time limit condition, a condition is required to ensure compliance with the approved plans as this provides clarity. I note the suggestion with regard to matching materials but the approved plans refer to '*Feature Timber Cladding TBC*', it is therefore necessary for the parties to agree the details of this material, along with the other materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces.
12. The appeal is allowed subject to the conditions above.

Richard Aston

INSPECTOR