



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2023

by Ian McHugh DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 14 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/22/3311148

2 Beechanger Cottage, Swainsehill, South Warnborough, Hook, RG29 1SA

- 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 P Hay and Ms C Coates against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01740/HOU, dated 3 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side extension, oak porch and replacement orangery.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the two-storey side extension and oak porch. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the replacement orangery and planning permission is granted for a replacement orangery at 2 Beekeeper Cottage, Swainsehill, Hook, RG29 1SA, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 22/01740/HOU, dated 3 August 2022, and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, **insofar as they relate to the replacement orangery only**: Location Plan; Block Plan; Existing Floor Plans - 22-4889-P-01; Existing Elevations - 22-4889-P-02; Proposed Floor Plans - 22-4889-P-03A; and Proposed Elevations - 22-4889-P-04A.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of both the existing dwelling and the location.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling, which is located in an open rural location. It is in a prominent position close a narrow country lane. Both the appeal property and the adjoining dwelling have a distinctive and balanced appearance with the main two storey central parts flanked by single storey side sections. The symmetrical appearance of the pair of dwellings is a distinctive and attractive attribute that contributes positively to the architectural qualities of the dwelling and to the character of the area.

4. The proposal is a resubmission of an earlier proposal for a first-floor side extension, oak porch and replacement conservatory (Council reference: 22/00564/HOU). The proposal is now to construct a two-storey side extension, an oak porch on the front elevation and a replacement orangery/garden room at the rear. The appellant has sought to address the Council's earlier decision by amending the design of the side extension by reducing its height and changing the roof from a gable to a hip. In addition, the extension would be set-back from the existing front wall of the dwelling by 0.5m.
5. The Council has no objection to the replacement orangery and I have no reason to disagree with the Council's view. It would not be visible from the highway and it would sit comfortably and sympathetically at the rear of the dwelling.
6. However, the proposed two-storey extension and porch would not contribute positively to the existing dwelling or its surroundings. Notwithstanding the appellants' comments and illustration highlighting the quantum of development, the height and overall mass of the proposed side extension would alter the existing proportions of the dwelling and disrupt the symmetrical appearance of the pair of semi-detached properties.
7. I recognise that the side extension would be slightly lower than the highest part of the existing roof of the dwelling and that it would be set-back 0.5m from the front wall of the property. Whilst this would give the extension a degree of subordination, it would still be an overly dominant feature, which would be clearly visible from the public highway (notwithstanding the narrow width of the road).
8. In addition, I consider that the proposed front porch would also be an unsympathetic addition to the property. Its mixture of roof styles would be out of keeping with the existing porch's simple form, which is also a distinctive characteristic of the dwelling.
9. The Development Plan for the area comprises the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (LPSS) and The Hart Local Plan – Replacement 1996-2006 (LPR). Policy NBE9 of the LPSS seeks to ensure that the design of all development is of high quality. Saved Policy GEN1 of the LPR requires (amongst other things) for developments to be in keeping with local character having regard to (amongst other things) scale, design, massing, height and prominence. For the reasons given above, I consider that the proposal would conflict with these policies.
10. In reaching my decision, I have considered the benefit of increasing the size of the dwelling, in terms of living conditions and improvement to housing stock. I have also considered the fact that other properties in the area have been extended and that some of these extensions are larger and visually prominent. However, these factors do not outweigh the significant and unacceptable harm that would result from the appeal proposal, as my decision is based on the particular characteristics and features of the appeal property. Consequently, they do not set a precedent for this appeal.

Conditions

11. The Council has suggested conditions in the event of the appeal being allowed. I have imposed the standard conditions relating to the commencement of development and the list of approved plans. The Council has also suggested a

condition requiring the use of matching external materials. However, my decision is to allow the replacement orangery only and I note that the plans state that it will be constructed using timber cladding. Therefore, a condition is not necessary.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is allowed in relation to the replacement orangery. Regarding the proposed two-storey side extension and oak porch, the appeal is dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR