

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2023

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th February 2023

Appeal Reference: APP/J1915/D/22/3312575

17 Dovedale, Ware SG12 0XL

- 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 Mrs C Green against the decision of East Herts Council.
 - The application (reference 3/22/1368/HH, dated 29 June 2022) was refused by notice dated 30 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as follows: *"Rear double storey extension; first floor extension to be set back from ground floor extension; size of first floor is dictated by relation to neighbouring window with respect for right for light; materials to match"*.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the "erection of part single and part two-storey rear extensions with additional windows to first floor rear elevation and ground and first floor side elevations", at 17 Dovedale Ware SG12 0XL, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference 3/22/1368/HH, dated 29 June 2022), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Preliminary points

2. Notwithstanding the description of the application that was given in the application form, the nature of the proposal can more clearly be expressed as set out in the Council's decision notice and in the appeal form, as the "erection of part single and part two-storey rear extensions with additional windows to first floor rear elevation and ground and first floor side elevations".

Main issue

3. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

4. Ware is an important town in Hertfordshire with a range of services and facilities and extensive residential areas. The appeal site is located in a residential suburb in the northern part of the town. Dovedale is located in a

- relatively dense part of the residential suburb, characterised by houses in short terraces, in residential streets and culs-de-sac, with some designated garage and parking areas.
5. The existing house at 16 Dovedale is located at the end of a short terrace of four two-storey houses, constructed in a conventional style, with small front gardens and longer back gardens. The terrace faces a cul-de-sac that is surrounded by similar properties. There is a small garage courtyard behind numbers 19 to 23 Dovedale but number 17 has a longer garden, although it narrows markedly towards the rear. Number 17, then, has a long side boundary, defined by a close-boarded fence, alongside the highway that gives access to the head of the cul-de-sac.
 6. It is now proposed to construct an extension at the rear of the existing house, with a single storey section across the width of the rear elevation, combined with a two-storey section on the corner of the building. In addition, new windows would be created in the side gable elevation of the house, to light the centre of the building.
 7. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities. The achievement of good design standards includes both protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation in new development.
 8. Those basic principles are also established by the Development Plan. In particular, Section 17 of the 'East Herts District Plan' (dated October 2018) is concerned with "Design and Landscape" and it is aimed at respecting or improving upon existing surroundings while making good use of urban land and accommodating changing needs. Policy HOU11 provides more specific criteria in relation to residential extensions and alterations (and the like).
 9. In this case, the proposed two-storey part of the extension would increase the length of the flank wall of the existing house. The gable form would be maintained, however, with a subservient rearward extension that would have its eaves facing the boundary. Additional windows in the flank wall, facing the road, would also enliven the elevation and help to make the finished building more harmonious in the streetscene. The proposed two-storey extension would, moreover, project from the main rear elevation of the existing building only by a relatively limited amount, whereas the single-storey part of the extension would project further.
 10. In itself, the single-storey part of the extension would have only a very limited impact on its surroundings and it is not objectionable.
 11. Nor would the scheme as a whole have an undue impact on the amenities of neighbours, because of the limited height of the proposed single-storey element and the fact that the two-storey section would be set away from the joint boundary with the neighbour, as explained in the submissions.

12. I am convinced that the proposed two-storey extension would not be odd or out of character with either the host building or its surroundings and I accept that the surrounding area can satisfactorily accommodate such a change as that which is now proposed. The appeal scheme would amount to a modest extension to the existing dwelling but it would provide useful additional space and would, thereby, add to the stock of residential accommodation in the locality, albeit in a very limited way.
13. In short, I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with the national legislation or the Development Plan, in principle, and that it is acceptable in planning terms. I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.
14. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of the conditions suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal). Conditions are necessary, of course, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF 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 drawings:
 - drawing number 271 PL001 revision A (Site and Block Plans);
 - drawing number 271 PL100 revision B (Existing Plans);
 - drawing number 271 PL101 revision C (Proposed Plans);
 - drawing number 271 PL200 revision C (Existing Elevations);
 - drawing number 271 PL201 revision C (Proposed Elevations).
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.