

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2023

by S. Hartley BA (Hons) Dist.TP (Manc) DMS MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/D/22/3313615

18 Valerian Close, Eaton Ford, Cambridgeshire PE19 7GT

- 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 and Mrs Weldon against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: 22/01733/HHFUL, dated 9 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is a first-floor extension over existing garage and study, new 2 storey porch and removal of existing bay window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is detached and positioned at the end of a residential cul-de-sac. In this part of the estate the dwellings are large and positioned within spacious and landscaped plots. They either have single or double garages with some attached to the main properties and some detached. The garages are generally closer to the road than the main dwellinghouses, but nevertheless, are subordinate in scale to the host properties. Indeed, owing to the height of the garages, it ensures that there is some welcome open relief between each of the residential properties.
4. To the passer-by there is a pleasing consistency to the scale and general pattern of development in this close. In addition, there is a uniformity to the design of the dwellings in so far that they have imposing ground floor bay windows and similarly proportioned and designed windows to the front elevations. This consistency is also reflected in terms of the use of wall and roofing materials. The above attributes add positively and distinctively to the character and appearance of the area.
5. The extension over the garage, coupled with the two storey porch, would not be subordinate in scale to the host property. As a whole, the development

would have a dominant impact when seen within the street-scene and would depart significantly from the design consistency that prevails in the rest of the cul-de-sac. Overall, the extensions would appear bulky and prominent in the context of the immediate area. Owing to the position, height and bulk of the development, it would seek to enclose the otherwise open space that prevails between properties in the close. The above harms would be compounded as a result of the use materials that are not reflective of those existing in the street-scene and as a consequence of the design changes made to the existing bay window.

6. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would not therefore accord with the design, character and appearance requirements of policies LP11 and LP12 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, Policy A3 of the adopted 2016 Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029, Part 3.7 of the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD 2017 and chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Other Matters

7. The appellant has referred me to examples of other extensions in the surrounding area which incorporate gable-end roof features. I am not aware of the specific circumstances that led to these developments being constructed. In any event, I have considered the appeal proposal on the basis of its impact upon the character and appearance of the immediate area, i.e. the cul-de-sac of Valerian Close. For the reasons outlined, I have concluded that the proposal would not amount to good design in the context of this environment. Therefore, the examples of other developments referred to by the appellant do not alter or outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.
8. I acknowledge the supportive comments made by St Neots Town Council. However, this is not sufficient on its own to outweigh the identified conflict with local and national planning policy. I accept that the proposal would likely lead to some construction employment. However, that is a benefit that would be short lived. The proposal would have the effect of providing a dwellinghouse that is different to others in the area, thereby providing increased housing stock choice. It would also seek to make more efficient use of the site. However, these matters need to be weighed against the significant harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. This is a matter of overriding concern and hence none of the other matters raised lead me depart from my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the development would not accord with the development plan for the area taken as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

S. Hartley

INSPECTOR