



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2023

by S Pearce BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/22/3290876

Greenbanks, Toms Hill Road, Aldbury HP23 5SA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant full planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Barraclough against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02968/FHA, dated 27 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of a part single storey, part two storey front, side and rear extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of a part single storey, part two storey front, side and rear extension at Greenbanks, Toms Hill Road, Aldbury HP23 5SA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/02968/FHA, dated 27 July 2021, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not 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: Floor & Roof Plans as proposed drawing no. PA211-04, Elevations, Section & Street Elevation as proposed drawing no. PA211-05, Site Plan as proposed drawing no. PA211-06, and Site Plan drawing no. PA211-1250.
 - 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.

Preliminary Matter

2. In determining this appeal involving development within a Conservation Area, I have had special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Aldbury Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Aldbury Conservation Area is a well-preserved village that has developed around a medieval core and with a triangular green as its centre, providing a focal point. The village sits below the wooded escarpment of Aldbury Common and is enhanced and softened by the green planting within it. Buildings within the village are predominately two storeys high which, together with the topography of the area and spaces around buildings, allow for views into and out of the village. The views combined with the footpath network, provide a sense of permeability within the village.
5. Toms Hill Road lies within a character area (Area 3) identified within the Aldbury Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals 2008 (CA). This area has seen most of the more recent village expansion, which has taken place around the allotments and recreation ground. The CA highlights a viewing point from the allotments and recreation area, which allows broad views of the north and east of the village, towards Toms Hill Road.
6. The conservation area's significance, insofar as relevant to this case, is derived from the historic development around the medieval core of the village. This is affected by views into and out of the village, spaces around buildings, the permeable townscape and green planting.
7. Greenbanks comprises a modern two-storey detached dwelling, with flat roof single storey garage. Greenbanks and the neighbouring properties, Trinity and Ridgeways, have broad front elevations. These properties are sited within wide plots, which are set back some distance from Toms Hill Road, behind predominately soft, green frontages. The scale and layout of these properties, together with the topography of the area, allows for views over and between these. Greenbanks therefore contributes to the character of the conservation area.
8. The proposed two storey side extension reinforces the broad front elevation of Greenbanks. The front elevation at ground floor of the side extension would be in line with the frontage of the main property, with the first floor contained within the roofspace. The scale of the extension is further reduced through the low eaves to the front elevation. Due to the single storey height of the rear extension, this element of the proposal would be viewed against the backdrop of the existing property and would not affect views over or between Greenbanks and Trinity.
9. The proposed extension is sited broadly on the same footprint as the existing garage it is to replace. Whilst the footprint of the proposed extension is slightly larger, it would still maintain a noticeable gap between the side of Greenbanks and the shared boundary with Trinity. This gap, the subservient design and scale of the extension, combined with the topography, ensures the development would not result in a continuous frontage along this section of Toms Hill Road.
10. The proposed side extension at ground floor, whilst forward of the front of the existing garage it is to replace, would be broadly in line with the front of the main property. It would not therefore significantly encroach into the open frontage of the site. The area to the front of the existing garage is already hard surfaced, so there will be no loss, in full or part, of any existing vegetation.

11. The overall design of the extension appears subservient to the main property. Subject to appropriate materials, the extension as a whole would not result in a prominent feature in the street scene and would maintain the soft, green frontage of Greenbanks. It would not therefore be detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene. Similarly, the design and scale of the extension would maintain the permeability and existing views in and out of the village, including the view from the allotments and recreational ground.
12. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposal complies with Policies CS11(b), CS12(f) and CS27 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy 2013 (CS), saved Policy 120 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan Adopted 2004 (LP), the CA and the Framework. Collectively, these policies seek to protect and enhance the historic environment and ensure development will positively conserve or enhance the conservation area, preserve attractive streetscapes and integrate with the streetscape character.

Other Matters

13. A previously refused application for a similar proposal at Greenbanks has been brought to my attention. Whilst limited information has been submitted, I note that there are differences between the design of the two proposals. I have therefore considered this case based on its own merits.

Conditions

14. The Council have recommended three conditions, relating to time limit, approved plans and materials. For the avoidance of doubt, development needs to be carried out in accordance with the statutory time limit and approved plans. In order to ensure a satisfactory appearance, with specific regards to the conservation area, materials need to match those used in the existing property.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, I have not found conflict with any policies in the development plan. On that basis, I find no conflict with the development plan as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate that I should conclude other than in accordance with the development plan. Consequently, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S Pearce

INSPECTOR