The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2023

by Ryan Cowley MPlan (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/22/3300426
Sawmill Cottage, Waterend Lane, Ayot St Peter, Welwyn, Hertfordshire AL6 9BB

- 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 Carol Hunt against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Council.
- The application Ref 6/2022/0534/HOUSE, dated 6 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2022.
- The development proposed is described in the application form as "Minor amendment of rear and side dormer to an already approved plan 6/2021/2843/HOUSE"

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Planning permission has previously been granted at the appeal site for the erection of a first-floor extension (Council ref 6/2021/2843/HOUSE). The full details of this previous planning permission are not before me. I understand however that the appeal proposal comprises the resubmission of this scheme, albeit includes alterations to the proposed rear and side dormer windows.

4. The proposed plans before me in this instance however contain several discrepancies and errors. In particular, the form, size and layout of the proposed extension and dormer windows appear to differ between the proposed roof plan, first-floor plan and elevation drawings. The following provides examples of the issues I have encountered when reviewing the plans. However, it is not an exhaustive list of discrepancies that may exist.

5. The proposed roof plan (plan no. 9) shows the flat portion of the roof of the extension adjoining the highest point of the main roof of the existing dwelling. However, the proposed elevation drawings (plan nos. 4, 5 and 6) show this sitting lower, in line with the lower ridge of the existing roof on the opposite side of the dwelling. The proposed roof plan also depicts this flat portion of roof as appreciably narrower than as shown on the proposed side elevation drawing.

6. The proposed roof plan indicates the main roof of the existing dwelling would retain a full 'X' shaped form, suggesting the entire roof of the proposed extension would be lower and/or set back, similar to the roof on the opposite

side of the dwelling. However, the proposed elevation and floor plan drawings suggest the roof plane of the proposed extension would sit flush with the plane of the main roof at the front and rear. The left half of the 'X', as depicted on the proposed roof plan, would thus be partially obscured/removed. The space between the ridge of the proposed rear dormer and the flat portion of the roof of the extension also appears to differ between the proposed roof plan and elevation drawings. The proposed side dormer is also depicted on the proposed roof plan as sitting at the very edge of the roof, whereas on the proposed first floor plan and elevation drawings it is shown as somewhat set back.

7. There are also discrepancies between the proposed elevation drawings, and particularly with respect to the proposed dormer windows which the appeal proposal is seeking to alter. On the proposed rear elevation drawing the eaves level of the proposed rear dormer is depicted as similar to that of the flat roof of the proposed side dormer. However, the proposed side elevation drawing suggests the flat roof of the proposed side dormer would be considerably lower than the eaves height of the proposed rear dormer. The proposed side elevation drawing also appears to depict the proposed rear dormer as somewhat set back from the rear elevation of the dwelling, whereas it is shown as flush with the rear wall on the proposed first floor plan drawing. Additionally, the vertical dimensions of the pitched roof of the proposed rear dormer differ between the proposed side and rear elevation drawings.

8. Other ambiguities have been created in the proposed drawings through shading/hatching, or lack thereof, which in some areas blurs the boundary between the proposed brickwork and roof tiles, particularly on the proposed side elevation drawing. In combination with the discrepancies above this further exacerbates the difficulties in understanding the full extent of the proposal.

9. I invited both parties to comment on discrepancies in the plans, including the way in which the proposed roof and dormer windows are represented when comparing the proposed plans to one another. The Council has responded recognising that several of the submitted plans contain discrepancies.

10. The Appellant has also acknowledged there is an error in the proposed roof plan. In response, they have sought to eliminate this error by submitting an amended version of the proposed roof plan, which alters the position of the proposed side dormer window and the roof form of the proposed rear dormer window. However, even if I were to accept this amended plan, this would not address the various other issues I have identified in the proposed plans.

11. Furthermore, if an appeal is made the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme and it is important that what is considered by the Inspector is essentially what was considered by the local planning authority, and on which interested people's views were sought.

12. Without clarity in the proposed plans, I cannot be sure of how the proposed extension would look when completed. I therefore cannot assess the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area with sufficient certainty. Consequently, I cannot conclude the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or surrounding area. I therefore conclude that the proposal does not demonstrate compliance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 which, among other provisions, seek to ensure the standard of design in all

new development is of a high quality and that it respects and relates to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Ryan Cowley

INSPECTOR