



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2023

by Nick Bowden BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/23/3319818

High Trees, Great Hornead, Hertfordshire SG9 0NR

- 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 Kathryn Stacey against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/22/1849/HH, dated 1 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a single storey side extension with a first floor balcony above behind tiled mansard roof, single storey glazed front porch extension, two storey side / rear / front extension incorporating enlargement of first floor front and side windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the design of the proposed extensions on the host dwelling and the street scene and whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Hornead Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. High Trees is a detached, circa 1970s, brick-built dwelling with timber cladding to the first floor and under a tiled, pitched roof. It is set within a substantially sized plot and surrounded by numerous mature trees. The dwelling is separated from the road by a generous lawn and a small stream.
4. The property is within the Great Hornead CA which is characterised by a variety of buildings and uses in the vicinity, albeit that much of the area is residential in nature. To the south side of the road, lower density detached homes of varying sizes prevail. To the north are a mix of comparatively smaller dwellings, the village hall, and current and former agricultural buildings. Most buildings are set within well landscaped plots with some barely visible in the public realm. Those that are closer to the road provide group interest due to their form and features neatly punctuating the vegetated nature of the area. The existing dwelling at High Trees represents a comparatively modern addition to the immediate locality. Its modest scale, use of wooden cladding to much of the upper floor and sylvan setting is such that it makes a neutral contribution to the CA.

5. The proposed extensions would considerably enlarge the existing dwelling. This would introduce a transverse gable with half hipped ends to front and rear and a further single-storey extension to the opposing side. The large two-storey extension to one side would noticeably unbalance the proportions of the house with the mix of half hips, full hip to one side and overhanging eaves failing to reflect the proportions of the existing dwelling. The use of patio glazing at ground floor level jars with the comparatively small windows to the upper floor which, in combination, gives a squat, unbalanced and excessively wide appearance. The extensions would fail to integrate with the existing dwelling in a satisfactory manner to the detriment of its present simple form.
6. S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. The extensions to the dwelling do not integrate in a satisfactory manner and they would fail the statutory test. I accept that the dwelling is set back from the road and within a substantial plot. However, this only assists in rendering the current dwellings presence in the CA as neutral, whereas enlarging the dwelling in the manner proposed would fail to preserve this situation.
7. Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stipulates that in situations where the harm to the CA is less than substantial, as in this case, this harm should be balanced against the public benefits. The appellant notes that the proposed extensions are for family use, as a home for life. This is a perfectly reasonable aspiration, but it is not a public benefit and does not outweigh the harm to the CA. Reference is also made to a previously permitted scheme for three new dwellings to replace the existing one. Details of this scheme have not been provided as evidence and as such I must give this negligible weight.
8. I conclude that the proposed extensions would fail to integrate satisfactorily with the existing dwelling to the detriment of its simple form and scale and to that of the street scene. It would, therefore, fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Hornead CA. The proposed development thus conflicts with policies HOU11, DES4 and HA4 of the East Herts District Plan (2018) and the NPPF. These policies seek a high standard of design and layout and to preserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all the evidence before me, including representations in support, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Bowden

INSPECTOR