
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2023

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/22/3312405

The Old House, Bransons Lane, Playford, Suffolk, IP6 9DN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Peter Elsom against East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref. DC/22/1794/FUL, is dated 3 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is single storey side/front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission for single storey side/front extension is refused.

Background & Main Issue

2. The appeal is against non-determination of the application, but as part of the appeal the Council supplied a Delegated Report, which includes a reason for refusal. This formed the basis for the Council's appeal statement. I have taken this reason to be the decision which the Council would have made had it been empowered to do so.
3. The main issue is therefore the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached dwelling located at the end of a steep driveway, accessed from a private road. It sits within a large plot, surrounded by, and interspersed with, trees and other planting. According to the information supplied by the Council, a public footpath passes through the site, close to the area of the proposed extension.
5. The original dwelling is an attractive period property with later extensions. This includes a two-storey brick wing, and a modern single-storey extension with a green roof. On approach to the dwelling along the drive, it is the north eastern (NE) elevation that is the most prominent, although the entrance into the property is via the 'side' north-western (NW) elevation. Regardless of which is the 'principal' elevation, it is these views of the original, traditionally detailed property with attractive brickwork, which are important aspects to the character and appearance of the dwelling. Although the existing single-storey extension projects forward of the original NE facade, it does not intrude into views of the original property, being set off to one side. The siting of previous

extensions gives them some subservience and ensures that the original building remains distinct and discernible.

6. The building is not listed, nor regarded by the parties as a non-designated heritage asset, but there is still a requirement in national and local planning policy to secure high quality design. In support of this objective, Policy SCLP11.1 of the East Suffolk Council Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020 (LP) requires proposals to demonstrate a clear understanding of the character of the built environment. Amongst other criteria, it requires them to respond to local context and the form of surrounding buildings in terms of overall scale and character, clearly demonstrating consideration of the component parts of buildings and the development as a whole in relation to its surroundings. It also requires the use of high quality materials appropriate to the local context.
7. The form of buildings in the surrounding area is varied, and there is no characteristic style. However, despite its landscaped setting, the route of the public footpath means that the dwelling is a visible part of this mixed context. The proposal has been designed with a deliberate contemporary approach to provide a contrast to the traditional detailing of the existing dwelling. Whilst I understand this aim, rather than being complementary, I consider that the flat-roofed design and form would be at odds with the architecture of the host dwelling. Its materials and the modern-scale fenestration would exacerbate this mismatch. There is no objection in principle to modern design, as noted by the style of the existing green-roofed extension, but the proposed siting would almost entirely obscure one of the most important elevations of the original building. This would detract from its character and appearance.
8. Although single-storey, the footprint of the extension would be similar to the original dwelling, and would be a sizeable addition. Considered cumulatively with previous extensions, the original building would appear to be subsumed by more modern additions. It would introduce a second style of contemporary extension visible on the NE elevation, of different shape, form, detailing and materials. The proposal would mask much of the traditional brickwork and detailing of the original house, but viewed alongside the nearby extension it would also create a somewhat disjointed elevation.
9. I note that the extension aims to help towards the energy efficiency of the dwelling by providing additional well-insulated living space but such improvements would not evidently be dependent on an extension of the size, design and siting proposed. The benefits would not outweigh the visual harm which has been identified.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, contrary to the design aims of LP Policy SCLP11.1 and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires developments to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, and to be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment.
11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR