



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2023

by Ian McHugh DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/D/23/3323448

Alpha, Ipswich Road, Holbrook, Suffolk, IP9 2QT

- 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 Webster against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/23/01184, dated 9 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 3 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is a rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a rear extension at Alpha, Ipswich Road, Holbrook, Suffolk, IP9 2QT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/23/01184, dated 9 March 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no 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: Site Location and Block Plan – 3040.23.3A; and Proposed Floor Plans Elevations and Sections – 3040.23.2E.

Procedural Matters

2. I note that the description of the development stated on the Council's decision notice and that on the appeal form differs from that stated on the planning application form. The normal convention is to use the description on the application form, unless it is inaccurate. Whilst the Council's description and that given on the appeal form is more detailed (the erection of a one and a half storey rear extension), the application form is not incorrect and, therefore, I have used it in my formal decision.
3. Since my site visit the Government has published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework 2023). However, none of the amendments contained in the revised version are relevant to this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached dwelling, which is situated with the settlement of Holbrook. It is part of a line of ribbon development that faces Ipswich Road. A detached dwelling, Lowlands, adjoins the site on one side, with open countryside on the opposite side and at the rear. A public footpath linking Ipswich Road to the countryside runs along the northern side boundary of the site.
6. The proposal is to erect (what the Council describes as a one and a half storey rear extension). It would have flat roof that would be hipped on one side. It would be clearly distinct from the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, which is of a traditional gable and hipped roof design, albeit with an existing flat-roofed, timber clad, rear facing dormer. The proposed extension would also differ in terms of its external materials with the use of red brick on the ground-floor and larch cladding on the upper floor. The walls of the existing dwelling are mainly white render. I note that the Council has no objections to the materials proposed.
7. The Council considers that the proposal would appear at odds with the design and appearance of the existing dwelling. It contends that its flat roof would have a greater visual impact than the existing flat roofs on the property. The Council also considers that it would have an adverse impact on the visual amenity experienced by users of the public footpath.
8. Consequently, the Council argues that the extension would conflict with Policies CN01 and HS33 OF The Babergh Local Plan 2006 and with Policy CS15 of its Core Strategy 2014. It also cites conflict with paragraphs 100, 126 and 130 of the 2021 version of The Framework. These policies and guidance seek (amongst other things) to ensure that new development reflects existing characteristics and features of the site and its surroundings and make a positive contribution to the area. Paragraph 100 of The Framework (which remains unchanged in the 2023 version) states that planning decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way.
9. The proposed extension would differ in its design and appearance when compared to the existing dwelling, largely due to its expanse of flat roof. Consequently, I accept that there is some conflict with the provisions of the Development Plan and with The Framework, as referred to above.
10. However, whilst the design may differ, I am not persuaded that the proposal would be unacceptably harmful. The first-floor element would appear subordinate to the existing dwelling because of its lower roof height. In addition, it would not be readily visible from Ipswich Road and only glimpses of it would be seen from the public footpath. On this matter, I walked the footpath during part of my site visit and I observed that much of the property was hidden from view by existing trees and hedging. Consequently, I am not persuaded that the amenity currently enjoyed by users of the footpath would be adversely affected. In my opinion, these material considerations outweigh any conflict with the policies of the Development Plan.

Conditions

11. The Council has suggested conditions in the event of the appeal being allowed. I have imposed the standard condition relating to the time period in which to

commence the development. For clarity, I have also specified the approved plans. Regarding external materials, whilst the standard condition refers to the use of matching materials, it is clear from the submission that they would differ. However, as the Council has no objection to the materials proposed and as they are also specified on the approved plans, a condition is not necessary.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal be allowed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR