



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2023

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20.10.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J1860/D/23/3324205

The Pink House, St Dunstan's Lane, Rochford, Tenbury Wells ER15 8SW

- 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 Robert Perrin against the decision of Malvern Hills District Council.
 - The application Ref: M/22/00778/HP dated 15 May 2022 was refused by notice dated 3 April 2023.
 - The application is for single storey side extension to existing house to create single garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey side extension to existing house to create single garage in accordance with application reference no. M/22/00778/HP dated 15 May 2022 subject to the conditions as set out in the Schedule below.

Procedural Matter

2. The description in the Council's decision notice differs from that used in the Appellant's original application form. I have therefore used the description of development used by the Appellant that I consider better reflects the nature of the development proposed.
3. Since the determination of this application a revised National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was published in early September 2023 whose main focus was not directly relevant to this appeal. Nevertheless, I have determined this appeal in accordance with the revised provisions within the Framework.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The Pink House is a detached, two storey dwelling that is, contrary to its name, rendered a white colour. The building has hipped roofs and presents an unarticulated side elevation onto St Dunstons Lane. This lane is a narrow, quintessentially rural lane that is characterised by not only its narrow width and curving nature but also its defining boundaries often of high hedges. St

Dunstons Lane appears to run on higher ground as it follows the rolling hills of the countryside here and at some points there are glimpses of extensive views beyond.

6. This part of the village of Rochford is a loose collection of houses of differing forms, scales and architectural design that roughly follow the line of the lane until it meets the junction with the B4204. Most properties are set some way back from the edge of the lane but it is a characteristic of the place that structures do not abide by any defined building line and that gables or frontages are common and visible when moving along Dunston's Lane, framing the view as one continues.
7. The appeal property is one such house, positioned as it is so close to the highway. Currently the house contains an enclosure with a green painted fence and an existing garage extension is located upon the same footprint as that of the appeal proposal to the side of the main house. This building is of a dark timber cladding and protrudes noticeably into the lane as well as containing overhanging eaves. This protrusion appears largely due to the subtle bend in the road here that makes the Pink House perhaps more prominent than others nearby.
8. The proposal before me seeks to regularise the side garage extension in order to create a more contextual extension to the main house in the form of a hipped roof building. Unlike the existing structure the new building would be constructed in white painted brick as opposed to the existing dark timber cladding that currently exists, but other than this, the proposal would be nearly the same. In this respect it would echo the materials of the main building and this was an approach that appears to have been supported by both parties both within the application and during a formal pre application enquiry.
9. The main point of contention therefore is the location and prominent nature of the building within the lane. I note the Council's Design Guidance¹ Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that raises the potential for garage extensions and outbuildings to over dominate the principal elevations of houses and this reflects the general requirement for good design as contained within Policy SWDP21 and the overarching policy within The Framework itself. However, the above policy, as well as the SPD also make it clear that development should be based upon a thorough understanding of a site's context in order to achieve successful design outcomes.
10. In this regard I consider it very important to understand the existing character of the village here. As mentioned above St Dunstan's Lane meanders slightly uphill and is very narrow. Its edges tend to be defined by high hedges, verges or occasionally structures or open areas of parking. The Pink House is located at a subtle bend in the lane and creates something of a pinch point here where its end elevation is clearly visible, as is the existing garage extension.
11. However, the building of structures so close to a country lane is not atypical within such a context and I saw on my site visit that there are examples of built form being tight up to the street in the wider area. In this case, although the garage would encroach close to the lane here, its siting and form would be

¹ South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, Overarching Design Principles Adopted March 2018.

generally consistent with the overall character of the area and that of a vernacular developed country lane.

12. In terms of materials and design, the alteration from dark timber cladding to white painted brick would be a great improvement and allow the building to better relate to its host building. As such the proposal, on balance, would be able to meet the requirements of Policy SWDP21 and the requirements within the Council's Design SPD.

Conditions

13. The application shall be approved subject to the standard conditions as well as a separate condition as suggested by the Council. A further condition regarding conformity to a 'Water Management Statement' was added within the Council's questionnaire but no such document appears to exist and I do not consider such a condition as being necessary for this proposal. As such I have omitted this condition accordingly.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I allow the appeal subject to the conditions below.

A Graham

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- i) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- ii) The materials used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
- iii) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Floor Plans and Elevations, Proposed 'Block Plan, Proposed Parking Plan with Tracking (Car Parking Spaces Plan).
- iv) The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until the access, turning area and parking facilities shown on Drawing 'Car Parking Spaces Plan' has been provided. These areas shall thereafter be retained and kept available for their respective approved uses at all times.