



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2023

by Sian Griffiths BSc(Hons) DipTP MScRealEst MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 January 2024.

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/D/23/3330645

13 Orlando Close, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 9LF

- 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 Claire Parrish and Julian Young against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/01716/FPH, dated 17 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is single storey side/rear extension and part front extension, attached rear pergola and replacement fencing on East boundary following removal of existing outbuildings. Alterations to fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission granted for single storey side/rear extension and part front extension, attached rear pergola and replacement fencing on east boundary following removal of existing outbuildings, alterations to fenestration, at 13 Orlando Close, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 9LF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/01716/FPH, dated 17 July 2023 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
2. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents: 2302/001 rev 2 (Location Plan); 2302/02 (Existing Site Plan); 2302/3 (Floor Plans-Existing); 2302/4 (Existing Plans); 2302/5 (Elevations-Existing); 2302/044 (Proposed Site Plan); 2302/045 (Floor Plans-Proposed); 2302/46 (Proposed Plans); 2302/47 (Elevations-Proposed); 2302/48 (Elevations Proposed).

Procedural Matters

4. During the determination of the application the description of development was amended by the council to reflect the elements of the proposal that require planning permission. I have therefore used the amended description included in the decision notice for accuracy.

Preliminary Matters

5. The Government published on 19 December 2023 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Neither the appellant nor the Council have made any further submissions regarding the revised

Framework, and I am satisfied that any references made to the revised Framework within this decision would not be unreasonable to the parties.

Reasons

6. The main issues are the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area.
7. Orlando Close is a pleasant, small modern (c1960s-1970s) residential cul-de-sac with a mixture of detached and semi-detached, two storey houses and 1.5 storey chalet-style bungalows set behind front gardens and with off road parking. The prevailing character is suburban with an open feel partly attributed to the spacing of the dwellings and lack of formal front boundaries.
8. The appeal property, No13 is one of a pair of semi-detached houses located on the corner of Orlando Close with Passingham Avenue where its front door is located. This gives the property a dual aspect and is clearly visible within the streetscene. It is elevated in brick with hanging tiles at first floor level and an interlocking tile roof and also differs from its adjoining neighbour having black window frames.
9. The proposals would add a significant single storey extension to the property to provide more living space and a guest bedroom and change the location of the front entrance to one which is reached from Orlando Close.
10. The appellant has chosen an angular, contemporary design which seeks to echo the shape of this corner plot. It would be subservient to the host dwelling in terms of its size. However, I acknowledge that it would be striking in its appearance, particularly given its prominent location.
11. The design quality of the proposal is evident in the care taken to conceal the rainwater goods and provide energy efficient features such as photovoltaic cells and a planted roof. The council consider that the extension would contain awkward roof junctions, but I do not agree. In particular, from the public domain the high additional window detailing breaks up the mass and reduces the effect of the height.
12. The principal elevation of the extension would be clad in black timber and I note the council's concerns in relation to this. However, I do not agree that timber cladding is particularly high maintenance: this is dependent on the type of timber and the treatment it is given. In any case, this could be covered by a planning condition to ensure good quality materials were used.
13. Policies D1 (Sustainable Design) and D2 (House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings) of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2022) (LP) sets out that new development must respond positively to its context, enhancing character and appearance, is not over-dominant and incorporates sustainable building technologies, amongst other things.
14. The Framework at para 139(b) sets out that proposed development that offers *'outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'* should be given significant weight.

15. As a result, I do not consider the proposed extension would be incongruous and would complement and enhance the character of the street scene, aligned to policies D1 and D2 of the LP and the relevant parts of the Framework.

Conditions

16. In addition to the standard commencement condition (1), a condition is necessary requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans (2) in order to provide certainty.
17. I have included a further condition (3) requiring materials to be approved in order to address the council's concerns about the quality and longevity of the proposed cladding.

Conclusions

18. For the reasons given and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal is allowed, subject to the conditions listed.

Sian Griffiths

INSPECTOR