



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2024

by C Billings BA (Hons), DipTP, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/23/3328343

Linden Cottage, 3 Lamberts Lane, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich IP5 1DR

- 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 Paul and Jemima Phillpot against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/23/2141/FUL, dated 30 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of single storey attached outbuildings to east (Lamberts Lane) and construction of part first floor (over existing single storey) and part 2 storey extensions to rear (West) and side (North) of existing building, together with associated internal and external alterations. Works to include external works, improvements to existing driveway/hardstanding and new surface water soakaway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published 19 December 2023 and updated 20 December 2023. Whilst the relevant sections of the new Framework have not changed in respect of the main issue of concern in this appeal, the paragraph numbering has changed. Accordingly, I have had regard to the updated version of the Framework in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed north side extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a traditional pitched roof, detached 1.5 storey dwelling. It is of a simple design, with front and rear gables and low eaves level and, has small flat roof dormer windows to either side roof slope. The appeal dwelling is set considerably forward, and closer to the road than the neighbouring dwellings to the south and, is at a slightly higher ground level than the road, with an open front boundary. As a result, the host dwelling appears prominent within the street scene. Also, because the host dwelling is a traditional cottage-style dwelling, located between more modern dwellings either side, it appears as a distinctive property in the street scene.

5. To the rear of the appeal property there are open fields and, to the north side there is a low detached bungalow (Twin Oaks), with its detached single storey garage located close to the appeal boundary. The surrounding area, in Lamberts Lane contains predominately large, detached dwellings set within spacious plots, and has a verdant character, with plentiful large trees and hedgerow frontages along this part of the lane.
6. The proposed side extension would not appear cramped nor significantly reduce the spacious feel of the plot. Also, the new extension would be considerably set back from the existing main front elevation of the host dwelling. However, due to the low height of the immediate neighbouring dwelling to the north, and the prominent forward position of the host dwelling within the street scene, the proposed side extension would be particularly noticeable from the lane.
7. The 3D model provided, shows that the overall scale of the proposed side extension would be seen in the context of the host dwelling. Also, the proposed extension would have a ridgeline that would be slightly lower than the main ridgeline of the host dwelling. However, due to the design of the proposed side extension, including the two-storey height of its eaves, its proportions and the large flat roof link to the host dwelling, the extension would not appear subordinate to the host dwelling. Rather, despite the proposed use of high quality materials, it would appear disjointed and would be unsympathetic to the traditional design and form of the host dwelling.
8. The flat roof dormer on the north roof slope of the host dwelling would be in front of the proposed flat roof link between the side extension and the host dwelling, and so would obscure some of it, when viewed from the lane. However, the proposed flat roof link would be larger, higher, and bulkier in appearance than the roof dormer and so, would not be completely hidden by the dormers when viewed from the lane.
9. Whilst I note the perspective sketch showing how the proposed extension would appear in the street scene in real life. This does not change my view, that the proposed extension would be at odds with the design and form of the host dwelling and that, the proposed side extension would appear overly prominent within the street scene.
10. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance 16, House Alterations and Extensions (September 2003) (SPG16) provides recommended approaches to design and, sets out that it is not intended to limit imaginative and innovative design. It, however, also states that the basic principles for the appearance of extensions and alterations to existing dwellings is that they should respect the character and design of the original building. Whilst I appreciate the proposed extensions would follow a more imaginative approach to extending the property, the proposed side extension would not respect the distinctive character and design of the host dwelling.
11. In view of the above, the proposed north side extension would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, contrary to Policy SCLP11.1 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (adopted September 2020), which, amongst other things, requires the design of development to demonstrate a clear understanding of the character of the built environment and use this understanding to complement local character and distinctiveness, and respond to local context and form of buildings.

Other Matters

12. The Council's Design and Conservation Team have not provided any comments on the proposal and, no objections have been raised by the Parish Council or any third party. However, the appeal property is not a listed building nor located within a conservation area. Furthermore, the absence of comments or objections from an internal consultee or third party would not make the proposal acceptable for the reasons I have identified.
13. It is proposed that some of the existing single storey walls would be retained and used in the construction of the new extensions. Also, the appeal property would have upgraded levels of insulation following the extensions and alterations, and the scheme includes the installation of solar panels on the dwelling. This would provide positive sustainable building approaches and low carbon and renewable energy measures, as supported by Policy SCLP9.1 of the SCLP and the Framework. I therefore afford some weight to these matters. However, these matters would not outweigh the harm I have found in relation to character and appearance, particularly as some of these measures could be introduced to the host dwelling without constructing the proposed side extension.
14. I acknowledge the highlighted difficulties in extending a 1.5 storey dwelling, due to the inefficiency of their first floor section. Also, I note the existing dwelling is not currently meeting the needs of the appellant's family, in terms of their required number of bedrooms. However, I do not have any substantial evidence to demonstrate why an alternatively designed extension would not be possible, which could meet the needs of the appellant and their growing family and respond positively to the local context and form of the host dwelling. Accordingly, these matters do not outweigh the concerns I have found in relation to the proposal.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I find there would be conflict with the development plan when read as a whole, and that there are no material considerations, which justify a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.
16. Accordingly, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Billings
INSPECTOR