
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 March 2024

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11.03.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/23/3335842

13 Bradgate, Cuffley, POTTERS BAR, EN6 4RW

- 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 Yiannis Neocleous against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 6/2023/1329/HOUSE, dated 27 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 27 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is ground floor, first floor and roof extension with garage conversion and internal amendments.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but as the parties have not provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed I have used the one given on the original application.
3. Since the application was refused a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published. However, as the policies of most relevance to this proposal have not changed fundamentally it has not been necessary to seek further comments from the parties.
4. The reason for refusal did not specify conflict with particular policies of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (LP) and the Northaw and Cuffley Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036 (NP). I have therefore taken into account the policies cited in the Council's delegated report and provided with its appeal questionnaire.
5. The parties have both referred to a development built at 9 Bradgate under permission 6/2020/0607/HOUSE, and the appellant also provided partial details of an extant planning permission at the appeal site, ref. 6/2020/1091/HOUSE. Given their relevance to the proposal, plans of these developments were sought from the Council prior to the determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the appearance of the dwelling and the character of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal property is a detached house set in an elevated position above the road. This part of Bradgate is characterised by dwellings constructed mostly in the same period, and although not identical, they share similarities in scale, design and materials. A particularly notable characteristic is the staggered roofscape to reflect the incline in the road.
8. The existing dwelling has a hipped roof to one side and a gable end at the other, and others in the vicinity are either hipped, gabled or mixed. Within the wider area, there are also examples of crown roofs, although these are less commonplace within this part of Bradgate. One notable example of a crown roof, which is quite distinct from the prevailing style of dwelling in the street scene, is at 9 Bradgate. However, from the Council's delegated report and the supplied plans, it would appear that the development has not been constructed in accordance with the permission. As such, I have taken into account the approved rather than 'as built' development in assessing the local context.
9. Planning permission has previously been granted for extensions to the appeal property which involved raising the roof ridge, and extending the hip to create a balanced side gable. A crown roof was confined to a modest section at the rear of the property, but otherwise the roof design was more reflective of that of the existing dwelling, and the prevailing roof form in the vicinity.
10. Within this context, I am mindful that the Council does not oppose the principle of raising the height of the dwelling, nor the introduction of a crown roof. However, the proposal would add a degree of height and bulk to the roof that would be out of keeping with the appearance of the host house, and the character of the street scene and area. As part of a reasonably consistent group with a staggered roofscape reflecting the incline of Bradgate, this proposal would disrupt the rhythm of the street scene. I appreciate that the resultant building would be no higher than No.15, but by being so close to its level it would break the pattern.
11. The appellant advises that the design of the proposal has been guided by that constructed at No.9, but the appeal statement also confirms that the change to the streetscape because of the planning approval for number No. 9 is substantial.
12. It would appear that the roof built at No.9 is materially different from the approved scheme, and as such offers limited weight to the proposal. Proportionally, the two developments would not be comparable, and with the greater depth of 'crown' in the appeal scheme, the proposal would appear unacceptably bulky and dominant. Due to the local topography and the gaps between buildings, the depth and bulk of the crown roof would be apparent in the street scene. Whilst I acknowledge the proposed differences between the proposal and the development at No.9, I am not convinced that the retention of the original front gable, lesser scale of the front extension and the use of materials would mitigate the dominance of the proposal on the dwelling and in the street scene.

13. I have had regard to the previous permission at this site, but do not share the appellant's view that the crown shape would have less of an impact on the street scape than the full width raised ridge of the approved scheme; that development was lower than now proposed, less bulky, and more reflective of the gabled roofs that predominate in the vicinity.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the appearance of the appeal property and the character of the area, contrary to the design objectives set out in the Framework, and LP Policy SP 9, which amongst other criteria requires proposals to deliver a high quality design which relates well to its surroundings and local distinctiveness, and to the character and proportions of the existing building, the surrounding context and the street scene in terms including height, mass, scale and detailed design. It would not accord with the requirement in NP Policy D1 e., for ridge heights to be in conformity with the adjacent properties to retain a continuous frontage, and with NP Policy D2 and the associated guidance for household extensions in Appendix 2.
15. For the same reasons, it would not reflect 5.2(i) of the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance, for extensions to be designed to complement and reflect the design and character of the dwelling and be subordinate in scale.

Other Matters

16. A neighbouring resident raised concerns regarding the structural effect of the works on their property as a result of the proximity and difference in land levels. However, this is a civil matter that would have needed to be resolved between the parties had the appeal been allowed, and is not a matter for consideration in this appeal.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR