



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 April 2024

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/D/24/3337843

Casa Mia, Stortford Road, Clavering, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4PE

- 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 Jan Stephens against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/23/2801/HHF, dated 9 November 2023, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as 're-development of existing semi-detached bungalow to include raising of the roof at the rear, to create a first floor. Single storey front and fenestration to remain unchanged. Rear extension to include a raised pitched roof, with side dormers, skylights, solar panels and rear and side fenestration. Existing chimney to the rear to be removed'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of the proposal in my banner from the application form although, based on the submitted drawings, I note that the scheme would include the removal of the existing flat-roofed side dormer facing Elmhurst, and the provision of a first floor rear extension with a gabled form, served by skylights on each side.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

4. Casa Mia, in common with most other properties on this stretch of Stortford Road, is set back from the highway. It and Elmhurst form a semi-detached pair, with a broadly single storey form and a gabled roof, and which sit on spacious plots. However, unlike its attached neighbour, Casa Mia has front and side facing dormer windows serving first floor accommodation in its roofspace, and it is finished in differently coloured, worn-looking materials.
5. To the other side, Breeze Mount is a detached bungalow with a distinctive tall hipped roof, and a simple, coherent form. Elsewhere along this stretch of Stortford Road, and as illustrated at Figures 8 and 9 of the appellant's statement, house typologies are varied, ranging from bungalows to two storey houses, some with dormers in their roofspace.

6. Amongst other things, the Uttlesford Supplementary Planning Document – Home Extensions 2005 ('SPD') sets out that extensions should respect the scale, height, proportions and form of the original house, and should be no higher or larger than it.
7. As a result of this scheme, Casa Mia's footprint would be only slightly increased, but the scheme's first floor would project a significant distance to the rear. The rear projection's eaves line would be well above the existing eaves of the host and Elmhurst, including the latter's single storey rear extension.
8. Consequently, it would have a bulky, broadly two storey form, which would be markedly at odds with the scale and proportions of the existing semi-detached pair. That discordant relationship between the proposed extension and the existing building would be clearly apparent from the rear garden of the host and its neighbours, with its tall southern flank wall creating a particularly awkward junction on the boundary where it would abut the much lower eaves and sloping roof of Elmhurst, thus unbalancing the pair's appearance.
9. The long northern flank wall would be clearly visible in the streetscene through the gap to Breeze Mount, where its high eaves would jar with the much lower eaves to the front of the host, and with the generally much more modest proportions of the original bungalow.
10. Although the proposed ridge would project above the host, its hipped form would limit its impact on the streetscene, and I observed that nearby Tamar has a similar design feature. However, unlike this scheme, Tamar's rear extension has a single storey form with an eaves line that respects its host. Whilst the form of nearby properties is varied, and some are taller and larger than this resultant property, they generally have a much more cohesive appearance than would be the case here.
11. Casa Mia has an unusual and awkward internal layout with ground floor bedrooms served off a living space, and with kitchen and dormer windows directly overlooking parts of Elmhurst to the detriment of both households' living conditions. In its favour, the scheme would largely address those issues, and it would provide additional and more practical living and home-working space for the occupants of this family home, in a more energy and water efficient building, with fresh new facing materials, solar panels on its roof, and biodiversity enhancements.
12. In those regards, it finds some support from the development plan, and from the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) but, given the inappropriate design, not with its paragraphs 124 e) or 135. Additionally, notwithstanding the previous applications on the site and pre-application advice, I am not persuaded from the evidence before me that this particular design is the only way in which those, or broadly similar, benefits could be achieved.
13. In general terms, Policies GEN2 and H8 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) require extensions to respect the scale and design of the original building, and to be compatible with the scale, form, layout and appearance of surrounding buildings. For the above reasons, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property, the semi-detached pair, and the area, and it would thus conflict with those policies, along with the stance in the SPD.

14. The scheme's limited public benefits would not outweigh the harm that it would cause and, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR