



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 June 2024

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/24/3342992

13 Elmwood, Sawbridgeworth CM21 9NL

- 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 Jeffrey Cousens against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/24/0290/HH, dated 14 February 2024, was refused by notice dated 10 April 2024.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "Proposed second storey extension above an existing porch way, in order to extend a very small bedroom."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the character and appearance of the locality and streetscene.

Reasons

3. Properties in the part of Elmwood within which the appeal site is located are characteristically semi-detached with single storey front projections such as in the case of the host dwelling. In consequence, the streetscene has a fairly high degree of consistency and uniformity. However, the proposed development would add another storey on top of this. Despite there being no increase in footprint and even if subservient to the host dwelling, in this context the addition, with a street facing gable end at first floor level, would be particularly unusual. As a result, it would be a visually intrusive and incongruous feature unacceptably out of keeping with the rhythm of the street.
4. The Appellant refers to other properties in Parkway and Yewlands and has provided photographs. Nevertheless, these are in other streets and not part of the setting within which the visual impact of the extension would be apparent. In any event, I have not been provided with any background details and do not know why any planning permissions were granted. As a result, no meaningful comparison can be made with the current proposal and there is nothing to show that the Council's decision making has been inconsistent.

5. For these reasons, it is concluded that the development would harm the character and appearance of the locality and the streetscene. As a result, there would be conflict with Policies DES4 and HOU11 of the East Herts District Plan 2018. Taken together and, among other things, these policies indicate that development must be of a high standard of design that reflects and promotes local distinctiveness while being of a form, design and size appropriate to the setting of the existing dwelling.
6. In the National Planning Policy Framework, it is indicated that decisions should ensure that developments satisfy a number of considerations. These include that the proposed development should add to the overall quality of the area, as well as being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, which would not be achieved in this case.
7. Local residents and the Town Council have raised no objections to the proposal. Nevertheless, this does not, in itself, confer acceptability on the proposal and I must consider this appeal on its own merits.
8. The Council considers that the proposed cladding to the extension would be appropriate. However, this is a neutral factor that weighs neither for nor against the appeal. In this case the enlarged bedroom would be achieved at the unacceptable expense of the quality of the built environment in Elmwood.
9. Taking account of all other matters raised and given the harm that would result the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR