



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: 27 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/24/3340936

33 Wychford Drive, Sawbridgeworth CM21 0HA

- 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 and Mrs M Silvester against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/23/2421/HH.
 - The development proposed is described on the planning application form as "Proposed first floor side extension with hipped roof. All materials to match the existing. The first floor will be cantilevered at the rear to eliminate the need for a column which may have caused damage to the roots of nearby planting situated along the boundary. The existing ground floor side extension brickwork will be obscured by a timber fence with existing planting trained through a trellis to provide a natural soft appearance to the overall side elevation of the property in the streetscene. (This application is a re-submission of refused application ref 3/23/1578/HH, dated 9-10-23)."
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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. The dwellings within Wychford Drive include a number at corner locations typically having both front and side elevations facing the street. Even in relation to their side elevations, these tend to be set back from the pavement either for their full two storey height or at first floor level. During my site visit I saw those properties in the vicinity specifically referred to by the Appellant and noticed that these all have at least some space between the flank of the dwelling and the pavement. Moreover, it is pointed out that these only comprise three out of ten corner properties so that the predominant character is one of an even more spacious relationship.
4. As a result, the corner plots provide an important degree of spaciousness and openness to the streetscene, preventing an unduly developed appearance. This includes the appeal site where a single storey side projection abuts the pavement. The property on the opposite side of the junction has its front elevation facing the flank of the host dwelling. It therefore contributes more to the openness of the streetscene at this point than the appeal site. However, despite abutting the pavement, the side addition at the host dwelling is of a

fairly modest scale and is only single storey in height allowing views over it of the sky and vegetation. As a result, it still makes a meaningful contribution to the overall sense of openness at corner locations within Wychford Drive.

5. The resultant double storey projection, abutting the pavement, would be a particularly unusual feature within Wychford Drive, unduly at odds with the general pattern of development. With its eaves height at the same level as that of the host dwelling and full two storey height side wall immediately adjoining the street it would introduce significant additional bulk and mass in this position.
6. Consequently, it would appear as an unacceptably dominant and overbearing feature at a prominent corner location. It would not therefore reflect a suitably modest increase in height. A new boundary fence, given the lack of any noticeable space between it and the side wall, would tend to highlight the cramped nature of the development rather than significantly mitigate it. Even with a trellis and vegetation trained through, the extension would rise significantly above it anyway.
7. For these reasons, it is concluded that the development would harm the character and appearance of the locality and the streetscene. Policies DES4 and HOU11 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 are relevant to this appeal. There would be no conflict with Policy HOU11 (b) as the side elevation would not be adjacent to another residential curtilage. However, the policy seeks compliance with other criteria and the siting, size and mass of the extension would not be appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the dwelling and surrounding area, contrary to Policy HOU11 (a). There would also be conflict with Policy DES4 which, among other things, seeks development of a high standard of design that reflects and promotes local distinctiveness. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the development plan.
8. 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.
9. The lack of any concern by the Council over the loss of vegetation is a neutral factor that weighs neither for nor against the appeal. A number of the properties referred to by the Appellant are in other parts of Sawbridgeworth. In consequence, they are not part of the context within which the proposed development would be most readily appreciated and against which its impact should be considered. Local residents support the proposal and the Town Council have raised no objections. Nevertheless, this does not, in itself, confer acceptability on the proposal and I must consider this appeal on its own merits.
10. Taking account of all other matters raised and given the harm that would result the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR