



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2024

by Ian McHugh DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/D/24/3343559

New Cottage, Ashwell Road, Newnham, Baldock, SG7 5JX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Matt Thomson against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00100/FPH.
 - The development proposed is the erection of detached double garage, front porch, installation of dormer windows to existing north and south roof slopes, alterations to fenestration following removal of existing chimney stack to main dwelling and replace existing exterior render with cladding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of detached double garage, front porch, installation of dormer windows to existing north and south roof slopes, alterations to fenestration following removal of existing chimney stack to main dwelling and replace existing exterior render with cladding at New Cottage, Ashwell Road, Newnham, Baldock, SG7 5JX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 24/00100/FPH, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Numbers ODC 24/03.06A; ODC 24/03.05A; ODC 24/03/.04A; ODC 24/03.01; ODC 24/03.02; and 24/03.03.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the development hereby approved shall be as specified on the approved plans.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and the Newnham Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached dwelling, which is faces Ashwell Road within the CA, backing onto open countryside. Properties within the CA are generally laid out along the road frontages in a traditional manner with front and rear gardens. The dwellings vary in terms of their age and scale and there is no consistent architectural theme. When determining proposals for development

in a conservation area, decision makers must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

4. In my opinion, the appeal property, which has been previously extended (somewhat unsympathetically) at the rear has a distinctive front elevation, because of its two steeply pitched gables. However, in heritage terms, I consider the property to have a neutral effect on the significance of the heritage asset. It stands alone in terms of its design and appearance and I am not persuaded that it needs to remain in its existing form.
5. The proposal, which was been amended during the application determination period, is for several different elements as detailed in the heading above. The Council contends that the proposal would not be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling because of its contemporary design and the use of modern materials. Furthermore, the Council states that the proposed garage in the front garden would be a dominant and imposing feature in the streetscene.
6. Policies D1, D2 and HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (LP) seek to ensure (amongst other things) that development proposals respond to the local context of the site; that extensions are sympathetic to the existing house; and the significance of heritage assets are preserved. I consider these policies to accord with the provisions of paragraph 135 and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
7. The proposed alterations to the front elevation of the dwelling, including the porch, would retain the existing characteristics and scale of the property and the installation of the new windows, roof lights and dormer would be relatively minor changes. At the rear, the proposed new dormer and changes to the fenestration sizes mean that the glazing would become a more dominant feature, but I am not of the opinion that this would be harmful, particularly as the rear elevation is not visible from public viewpoints.
8. Whilst the use of cladding in lieu of the existing render on parts of the building would introduce a modern material, the fact that the property stands apart from others and is of no particular heritage significance, means that there is no reason why the introduction of cladding should be unacceptable. The use of render on the front facing gable sections would also ensure that this would remain a prominent feature on the main elevation.
9. Turning to the proposed garage, I accept that buildings within front gardens are not a common feature within the CA, although a detached outbuilding has been built within the front garden of the neighbouring property (Crouches) and there is also the historic barn/outbuilding in front of Newnham Hall. The proposed garage (the design of which was amended during the planning application determination) would be a relatively modest structure that would be partially screened by existing vegetation. Consequently, I am not persuaded that it would be unduly prominent or harmful in the streetscene.

Conditions

10. The Council has suggested conditions in the event of the appeal being allowed. I have imposed the standard conditions relating to the time period in which to commence the development and the list of approved plans. To ensure a

satisfactory external appearance, a condition is also imposed requiring the use of the external materials that have been specified on the approved plans.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal be allowed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR