



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2025

by **Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd February 2025

Appeal Ref. APP/J1915/D/24/3353591

4 Warboys Close, Buntingford SG9 9GA

- 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 Jeff Laidler against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
- The application ref. is 3/24/1321/HH.
- The development proposed is: "Demolition of single storey rear projection. Erection of single storey rear extension with a roof lantern window, front porch and first floor side extension (above the garage). New side door and ground floor side window. Solar panels added to rear facing roof."

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for - Demolition of single storey rear projection. Erection of single storey rear extension with a roof lantern window, front porch and first floor side extension (above the garage). New side door and ground floor side window. Solar panels added to rear facing roof - at 4 Warboys Close, Buntingford SG9 9GA in accordance with the terms of the application, ref. 3/24/1321/HH, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the 5 following approved plans titled: Site Location Plan, Existing and Proposed Site Plans; Existing Floor Plans; Existing Elevations; Proposed Floor Plans; and Proposed Elevations.
 - 3) The exterior of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials specified on the submitted application form/plans.

Preliminary matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. The new 2024 version does not however differ from the previous version insofar it relates to the main issue in this appeal. The cases of the main parties will not therefore be prejudiced by my reference to the new version. I have proceeded on this basis.
3. The description of the proposal in the heading above is taken from the Council's decision notice. It is more precise than the one provided on the application form.

Main issue

4. The single reason for refusal in the Council's decision notice relates solely to the visual impact of the proposed first floor side extension above the garage. The Council considered that all other parts of the proposal were acceptable. I see no reason to take a contrary view. The main issue is therefore the effect of the proposed first floor side extension upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surroundings.

Reasons

5. No. 4 is a 2-storey detached house with an attached double garage that is set back from the frontage. The property stands towards the closed end of Warboys Close, a short cul-de-sac within a recently built housing estate. There is some variation in the house types in the close. Of the 9 dwellings in the close, 6 (including the appeal property) are located off what appears to be a private section of the carriageway where there is an informal turning area. Detached garages are in evidence at 7 of those properties. There is also an attached garage at 9 Warboys Close.
6. Given the position of the attached double garage, siting the proposed first floor side extension directly above would not result in a strident feature as it would be well set back from the main adjoining front brick wall and even further back from the dominant and attractive double-height advanced bay which is finished in render. The extension would be well designed, having a ridge set well below the main ridge, a roof form and tiling matching the main house and a well-proportioned rear dormer window. It would appear as a subordinate addition to the building and would not disturb the character and appearance of the existing dwelling.
7. Side extensions over existing attached garages or other structures are not evident in the close. This is of limited significance given the close's recent construction, the fact that only no. 9 could be extended in a similar manner and that the subject extension would be readily contained within the site without creating a visually damaging terracing effect. The proposed first floor side extension would not be unusual in itself and would not appear unduly assertive given its limited height, its position far back from the road and the front of the dwelling and the sizeable nature of the host building and 3 Warboys Close adjacent to it. This part of the development proposed would not therefore cast itself as a visibly significant feature in this location when seen from any available public vantage points. It would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area.
8. Horizontally-laid weatherboarding, even in the fibre cement version (*Hardie Plank*) as proposed, is a high-quality walling material found throughout the district. For example, this material is found across the housing estate to the south of Hare Street Road, with the front elevation of 4 Pinnock Close being the most obvious example. It is also common to find and entirely reasonable for there to be different walling materials on different parts of a dwelling. This adds variety to the street scene. Indeed, the Council did not object to the use of black *Hardie Plank* cladding on the prominent front porch or on the single storey rear extension, the upper side elevation of which would be just visible from the informal turning area outside 5 and 6 Warboys Close. The use of horizontally-laid, black *Hardie Plank* weatherboarding on the additions, including the proposed first floor side extension, would simply

complement this modern dwelling and add to the already diverse palette of walling materials in the close.

9. The proposed first floor side extension would sufficiently harmonize with the original building's character and appearance in terms of its siting, size, scale, design and material and would be respectful of the local character more generally and the setting of the site. Rather than appearing as a dominating and incongruous addition to the host property, it would display a high standard of design and make a visually positive contribution to its context and location.
10. I find on the main issue that the proposed first floor side extension would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surroundings. As it would be an example of high-quality design that reflects local distinctiveness, safeguard the quality and character of the site and its surroundings and involve the acceptable extension and alteration of an existing dwelling, there would be no conflict with the aims of Policies HOU11 and DES4 of the East Herts District Plan 2018. There would also be compliance with the key design themes in the Framework insofar as they relate to achieving well-designed places.

Conditions

11. I have reviewed the 3 conditions suggested by the local planning authority in its questionnaire. A condition setting the standard time period in which the development is to commence must be imposed. I shall also impose conditions requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the relevant approved drawings and constructed in the materials specified on the submitted application form/plans to provide for clarity and certainty as to the details of the approved development and to achieve a satisfactory appearance.

Concluding comments

12. Buntingford Town Council was concerned that the addition of a fifth bedroom will require increased parking provision. However, the proposal would enlarge existing bedroom 5 rather than add an extra bedroom as such and the scheme would accord with the parking standards in Policy T1 of the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031.
13. The scheme approved in 2015 at 3 Skipps Meadow is noted but this has played no part in the decision I have reached as each proposal should be assessed on its own individual merits in accordance with current development plan policies.
14. For the reasons given and taking into account all other matters raised and the lack of objections from local residents, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR