



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2025

By Terrence Kemmann-Lane JP DipTP FRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/24/3354749

Wheatcroft, Widford Road, Much Hadham, SG10 6AP

- 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 and Mrs Gooch against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/24/1621/HH.
 - The development proposed is a loft extension with front and rear dormer windows and rear roof light.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The issue in this case is the effect of the proposed front dormer on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the whether the character or appearance of the Much Hadham Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is occupied by a detached two-storey dwelling on Widford Road. It has a main hipped roof with a central chimney, two-storey bay windows, with a hipped two-storey side extension and a flat roof single storey rear extension. The dwelling features brick and stone elevations, timber sash windows and a grey slate roof. The existing rear extension is a modern addition featuring larch cladding, aluminium glazing sections and a zinc roof capping.
4. The council's refusal reasons refer to the façade and the proposed front dormer, and the planning officer's report states "it is not considered that the rear dormer in isolation would cause harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling or the Conservation Area", from which it may be taken that my consideration of the proposal can be confined to the proposed front dormer.
5. The streetscene is varied in character. Neighbouring dwellings are of differing built forms, and there is recent development on the eastern side of Widford Road, but certainly Wheatcroft and its neighbours are of a quality that reflect the reason for the designation of the conservation area.
6. The appeal dwelling is late Victorian, the date of 1891 being inscribed on the main front elevation. The hips of the main roof, above the double bayed main façade, meet at a substantial central chimney stack that I consider is an important element in the design which is echoed in the adjacent Wheatcroft Terrace and elsewhere in

the area¹. The officer's report suggests that the council identifies Wheatcroft, along with the adjacent Wheatcroft Terrace, as a building with significant historical value, due to its well-preserved traditional appearance, characteristic hipped bay windows and stone dressing, and that it would therefore likely be considered a non-designated heritage asset. Thus it has no formal status, but I agree with the officer's description "well-preserved traditional appearance" and its characteristics which indicate that it plays a positive part in the identity of the conservation area and its value.

7. Due to the relatively narrow front elevation of the original part of the house, and the prominence and bulk of the Chimney, the proposed dormer would occupy a substantial part of the roof slope between the roofs of the 2 bay windows. Indeed, the drawing of the proposed front elevation, No.2402_1220 Revision B, suggests that the ridge of the dormer's gabled roof would run to the bottom of the stack, although the side elevation shows it meeting the roof just below. Whichever is the intended situation, the juxtaposition of the dormer with the stack would be visually unsatisfactory. Adding to this are the rather square proportions proposed, which do not relate well with the more vertical existing fenestration, contrasting particularly with the narrow first floor window and doorway below.
8. My conclusion is that the proposed front dormer window would not relate well with the rather fine late Victorian front elevation, and would appear incongruous. As such it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Much Hadham Conservation Area.
9. In reaching this conclusion I have noted that Wheatcroft is not identified as an unlisted building protected from demolition or considered of sufficient quality to become listed, and the council does not hold a list of local listed buildings. It also does not fall within a 'Selected important view' within the Conservation Area, such views being identified on the Conservation Area Appraisal Plan 2. It is also the case that the appeal building does not come within the settings of the nearest listed buildings.
10. Nevertheless, for the reasons that I have given in paragraphs 6 to 8 above, the appeal proposal as it relates to the front dormer does not accord with Policy HA4 'Conservation Areas' of the East Herts District Plan 2018 in respect of the specific criteria that are applied to the assessment of extensions and alterations, specifically (c) Be of a scale, proportion, form, height, design and overall character that accords with and complements the surrounding area; and (d) In the case of alterations and extensions, be complementary and sympathetic to the parent building. The appeal with therefore be dismissed.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR

¹ Picture 5 in the Much Hadham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan illustrates "The importance of chimneys in Much Hadham's architectural composition and quality".