



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 May 2025

by **Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/25/3364416

15 Manor Road, Bishops Stortford CM23 5HU

- 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 Alex Skinner against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/25/0225/HH.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as “Proposed roof works to the existing single storey side extension, first floor side extension, loft conversion and replacement of chimneys and existing timber sash window”.
-

Preliminary matters

1. The Appellant points out that the scheme was amended and revised plans were submitted during the application process. However, the Council’s decision was based on the original drawings provided with the application. The Appellant has expressed concern about the Council’s handling of this matter, which also included taking pre-application advice. Nevertheless, this does not confer acceptability and I must consider the appeal on its own merits.
2. The revised drawings provided with the appeal would amend the scheme with changes to the roofscape that include the length of ridges, the position of step downs in the roofline and a new roof slope above the first floor on the southern side towards the western end. These changes would materially alter the proposal and I shall decide the appeal having regard to the drawings that were considered by the Council.

Decision

3. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bishop’s Stortford Conservation Area, within which the site is located. In reaching my decision I have applied Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that when assessing proposals for new development within a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance.

Reasons

5. The appeal concerns a dwelling that is a non-designated heritage asset. It dates from the early 20th century with features such as mock Tudor cladding, timber sash

windows and brick corbels. I saw at my site visit that it makes a positive contribution to the architectural quality of the Area, as is said by the Council's Conservation and Urban Design (CUD) consultee to be indicated in the Conservation Area Appraisal. With the adjacent dwellings at nos 7-13 it forms a distinctive and particularly cohesive group.

6. The host dwelling is a detached property at the northern end of the group. Those to the south comprise two pairs of semi-detached dwellings each having bay windows at ground and first floor level. No 15 closely reflects these but is of a noticeably lesser scale and height compared to the pairs of properties so that it is subordinate to them. There are other dwellings in the street of a similar age, form, proportions and design that further reinforce the attractive Edwardian character.
7. The Appellant points out that the raised main roof would remain below those of adjacent dwellings. It is also indicated that Edwardian detailing would be retained and replicated. The extent of the mock Tudor cladding would not change significantly. However, the raised ridge would only be fairly minimally below those of the adjacent pairs of semis. Moreover, the extended property would have a significantly higher eaves level. These factors would result in an excessive vertical emphasis, making it appear unduly elongated, with the flank wall being disproportionately tall. The enlarged dwelling would be an overly dominant and incongruous presence, unduly competing with the adjacent properties and undermining the cohesion of the group.
8. In consequence, the proposal would significantly diminish the architectural integrity of the host dwelling and the positive contribution made to the Conservation Area. Because of the detrimental impact on the significance of the heritage asset, the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
9. It is indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) that if the harm in relation to the heritage asset is less than substantial it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, as set out in paragraph 215. Although less than substantial harm would occur in this case great weight should still be attached to it, as the Framework indicates in relation to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
10. No public benefits have been advanced by the Appellant in the grounds of appeal. However, the proposal would improve the quality of the accommodation, including provision of bicycle storage and an electrical charging point but these benefits would be largely private in nature. Matters such as the re-use of existing materials might reasonably be expected anyway. Other considerations that include the absence of any parking concerns and access to public transport are noted but acceptability in these respects are neutral factors that weigh neither for nor against the proposal.
11. Having regard to all other matters raised, including those in the Design, Access and Heritage Statement, these can only be afforded fairly minimal weight in favour of the appeal and are substantially outweighed by the adverse effect in relation to the heritage asset.
12. Taken together and among other things, East Herts District Plan 2018, Policies HA1, HA4, DES4 and HOU11 and Bishops Stortford Town Council Neighbourhood

Plan Policy HDP2 broadly reflect the statutory requirement as well as the Framework policy referred to above and also intend that development should be of high quality and appropriate to the setting of the dwelling. Given the above findings there would be conflict with these policies.

13. It is acknowledged that the Council's CUD consultee did not recommend refusal of the application. However, the Council is not bound to follow this advice and I have found its decision to be justified. I also note that there were no objections to the proposal from members of the public but this does not justify accepting the development either.
14. In the above circumstances and regardless of the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent dwelling at no 13, it is determined that the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR