



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 November 2025

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/25/3369240

Stort House, 17 The Forebury, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, CM21 9BD

- 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 James Bovaird against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/25/0411/HH.
 - The development proposed is two storey replacement and enlarged rear extension and associated alterations. New attached new single-storey pool house and gym and associated alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey replacement and enlarged rear extension and associated alterations. New attached new single-storey pool house and gym and associated alterations at Stort House, 17 The Forebury, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, CM21 9BD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/25/0411/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) No development above ground shall take place until details / samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details / samples.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan; JB.P01; JB.P02; JB.P101; JB.P102; JB.S01; JB.EX01; JB.E02; JB.E101 and JB.E102.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey dwelling with a detached garage to the side, located centrally within a substantial plot. It is sited in a row of other detached houses of individual architectural designs that are similarly located in spacious grounds. At my site visit I saw that several of these have been significantly extended, including the neighbouring property at 19 The Forebury.

4. The appeal property is attractive in appearance with a prominent front decorative gable and overall, positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area. The dwelling has previously been extended by way of a gabled two storey rear extension which is set off-centre and together with the window positioning contained within it, creates an unbalanced appearance to the rear elevation of the dwelling.
5. The existing two storey extension would be demolished and replaced by a two storey extension which would be of about the same but would expand across the full width of the dwelling, as I note is the case with the extension to the adjacent dwelling at 19 The Forebury. The proposed two storey rear extension would not extend beyond the flank elevations of the host dwelling and would be read against the existing rear elevation of the dwelling. The rear extension would consist of three, evenly sized gables, each with a ridge height equivalent to that of the host dwelling. Even so, its design would ensure that the original roof form of the existing dwelling could still be appreciated.
6. The proposal would result in a well-balanced rear elevation and in my view would appear sufficiently subservient and appropriate in scale, height and form in relation to the host dwelling. The central gable would be contrasting in appearance which, subject to precise details of materials should I be minded to allow the appeal, would add visual interest.
7. The proposed extension would also result in a further gable on each side elevation of the dwelling. The proposed side gables would be visually subservient to the existing side gables, each of which contain a chimney stack feature. Given the set back of the dwelling from the frontage of the site, the flank elevations of the appeal property are not prominent in the street scene. In any event the proposed double side gables would reflect the design of the two storey extension carried out at No 19 The Forebury which forms part of the context of the appeal site irrespective of when it was approved. Furthermore, the proposal would ensure that the main architectural features and the form of the front elevation are preserved, especially as the single storey side additions would be subservient in height and set well back from the front elevation. I therefore conclude that the two storey rear extension would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the wider area.
8. The proposed single storey side / rear extension would be off set from the main rear elevation of the dwelling and would be connected to it in a satisfactory manner. The sloping roof form of the main part of the extension would be disguised by a parapet and by the pitched roof form of the utility room side extension and accordingly the extension would not be appreciable in the street scene.
9. Whilst of considerable depth, given the siting of the extension mainly to the side of the host dwelling and its low roof form, I am satisfied that the extension would be suitably subservient in appearance to the host dwelling and would not significantly detract from its character and appearance.
10. Having regard to the overall size of the plot, I cannot agree that the extensions, either individually or cumulatively, would result in an overdevelopment of the site. Instead, I conclude that the proposal extensions would be of proportionate in size, scale, mass, form and design and consequently, would not result in material harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling or the surrounding area.

11. The proposal would therefore comply with Policies HOU11 and DES4 of the East Herts District Plan (2018) which together and amongst other things, require development to be a high standard of design and layout to reflect and promote local distinctiveness and for extensions to generally appear as a subservient addition to the dwelling and to be of a size, scale, mass, form, design and materials that are appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the existing dwelling and/or the surrounding area. There would also be no conflict with the high quality design objectives set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).
12. The Council confirm that the site is within the Sawbridgeworth Neighbourhood Plan (NP) area. However, no conflict has been identified with any of the NP policies and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Other Matters

13. The proposed single storey extension would be set in from the well screened boundary with 15 The Forebury and given its siting and low height, I am satisfied that it would not result in material harm to the living conditions of the adjacent occupiers. Any noise emanating from the future use of the pool, or from associated plant is unlikely to be of a level that would be materially harmful to the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard implementation condition, the approved plans condition is imposed for certainty. A condition requiring approval of materials is necessary to protect the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.
15. I have no evidence before me to suggest that a condition requiring two integrated 'swift' bricks would be reasonable or necessary.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR