



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 April 2009

by **J A B Gresty MA MRICS**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
for Communities and Local Government

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Decision date:
19 May 2009

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/A/09/2097216

Little Acres, Bonks Hill, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire CM21 9HU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs P Davenport against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
- The application (Ref 3/08/1954/FP), dated 14 November 2008, was refused by notice dated 16 January 2009.
- The development proposed is the demolition of single storey rear additions comprising utility, lobby, WC, and games room and replacing with two storey rear extension comprising ground floor enlarged kitchen, utility, WC plus playroom and first floor games room.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a substantial detached house with accommodation on three floors. The house is set back from the road with large front and back gardens. The property has a number of outbuildings, including a detached garage and a detached garden-room to the back of the property. In general the house appears well proportioned and is in keeping with its surroundings.
4. The proposal is for a new two-storey extension to be built on the footprint of an existing ground floor extension situated to the side of the main house. Policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review (LP), April 2007, is a general design policy that requires all new development to be of a high standard of design and, amongst a number of criteria, to relate well to the massing and height of adjacent buildings and to the surrounding townscape. LP Policy ENV5 indicates that permission for extensions of dwellings in Sawbridgeworth will be granted provided that the character, appearance and amenities of the dwelling and any adjoining dwellings are not significantly adversely affected.
5. The extension would have a similar width to that of the existing main house. Although the ridge of the extension's roof would be lower than that of the main house, the roof of the extension would be linked to the main house roof to create a large and prominent mass of roof. The eaves of the extension roof would be at the same height as the main house roof, in my view adding to

visual bulk of the roofs. Whilst the depth of the extension would be considerably less than that of the main house, the development would have the effect of nearly doubling of the visual bulk of the front and back elevations of the main house.

6. The existing ground-floor extension is a functional structure that does not contribute positively to the appearance of the host property. However, it is not a prominent feature and is subordinate in its appearance to the main house. Accordingly I consider that it does not detract from the character or appearance of the main house.
7. Although the proposed extension would be similar in its general design to that of the main house, and it would only add about 14% to the overall floor space of the house, I conclude that as a result of its overall size and visual bulk the development would not be in keeping with the character or appearance of the existing host dwelling, contrary to the provisions of LP Policy ENV1 and ENV5.

Other Matters

8. The occupiers of the neighbouring property, Dormers, have expressed concern that the proposed extension would restrict the amount of sunlight that reaches their garden and that it would appear imposing when viewed from their property. The gable end of the extension would stand close to the south-western boundary of the back garden of Dormers. Whereas the existing extension is largely hidden from view from Dormers by the boundary fencing, the blank brick wall of the gable end of the proposed extension would be very prominent when viewed from Dormers' back garden and it is inevitable that the extension would cast shade onto the garden at certain times of day. Although Dormers' garden is relatively large, it is my view that the extension would appear unduly tall and overbearing when viewed from the back garden of Dormers, contrary to the provisions LP Policies ENV1 and ENV5.
9. The Council states that the appeal property is situated in the Greenbelt Area of Sawbridgeworth. However, it is not clear to me whether this is a reference to the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Council does not mention Green Belt policies in its submissions. In considering this appeal I have attached limited weight to the Council's reference to the Greenbelt Area of Sawbridgeworth. Had I been minded to allow the appeal within the scope of the stated development plan policies, I would have asked the parties to clarify the appeal property's Green Belt status and any relevant development plan policies.
10. Whilst the house is not readily open to wider public view from the road, it is visible from some of the neighbouring properties. Accordingly I consider the house's lack of prominence in the street scene not to outweigh the shortcomings of the proposal that I have identified above.

Conclusion

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

J A B Gresty

INSPECTOR