
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2016

by Joanne Burston BSc MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 August 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/D/16/3149883
53 Melbourn Road, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 7DF

- 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 and Mrs Felgate against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00520/1HH, dated 29 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is a new pitched roof and rear extension to existing garage, including two dormer windows (alternative to scheme approved under 15/01599/1HH).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a new pitched roof and rear extension to existing garage, including two dormer windows at 53 Melbourn Road, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 7DF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/00520/1HH, dated 29 February 2016 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan; and R/14/02/B.1 (Proposals).
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issues

2. The appeal is derived from an application for planning permission for the development as set out in my final bullet point in the banner heading above. That description was amended by the Council and split into two parts (A and B). In a split decision issued by the Council on 4 May 2016 (Ref 15/01599/1HH) Part A, for a rear extension to existing garage and pitched roof was granted planning permission, Part B for two dormer windows to facilitate the use of the roof space as a study/office was refused. I see no reason to disagree with the Council's approach and have confined my consideration to the latter.
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3. Accordingly, the main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed development on:
- the character and appearance of the appeal property and the local area; and
 - the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular reference to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a generously proportioned two storey detached home within a residential area. The surrounding properties are detached and semi-detached dwellings of varied design, lying in relatively sizeable gardens and coming together to form a neighbourhood of pleasing character and appearance.
5. The site is screened from Melbourn road by tall mature hedging and separated from it by a wide roadside verge. These features continue along the eastern side of the road and provide a spacious verdant character to the street scene hereabouts. The detached single storey double garage is situated towards the front of the plot, adjacent to the boundary hedging.
6. The proposed gable roof form of the dormers would relate well to the roof forms of the house. They would be no higher than the main ridge of the proposed pitched roof of the garage and set up from its eaves, providing a subordinate appearance to it. In particular, the dormer roof slope would match the pitch of the proposed garage roof and that of the main dwelling.
7. Within this context, the size, scale and design of the proposed dormers would be sympathetic to and assimilated in the varied design character of their surroundings. There would be no real impact on the street scene and although passers by would see glimpses of the dormers I am convinced that they would not be significantly jarring on the eye or detracting from the home and its environs to give cause for refusal. Accordingly, the scale, size and design of the proposed development would respect the established character of the surrounding area and would not be prominent in the street scene.
8. For these reasons it is concluded that there would be no conflict with Policies 28 and 57 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan no.2 with Alterations 1996 (the Local Plan) which in summary require, amongst other matters, extensions to be sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, window details and materials and that new development respects its context.

Living conditions

9. The introduction of dormer windows within the roof space would increase the number of windows which would overlook the parking area situated at the front of 53a Melbourn Road. However, the existing first floor windows of the appeal property currently overlook this area and at a closer proximity.
10. Furthermore, given the separation between the proposed dormer windows and No 53a and that in most cases, front gardens are open to public view, where lesser standards of privacy might be expected, the proposed development

would not result in material harm to existing occupiers at No 53a in terms of privacy issues or overlooking.

11. As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Local Plan Policy 57, which is consistent with advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), to seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Conditions

12. I have considered the suggested conditions against the tests set out within the Framework and the advice provided by the Government's Planning Practice Guidance.
13. A condition is imposed requiring external materials to match the existing house, to ensure that the development does not detract from the appearance of the area. It is necessary that the development shall commence within 3 years and be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to conditions.

Joanne Burston

INSPECTOR