



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 March 2021

by Euan FS Pearson BA(Hons) BTP FRGS MRICS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/D/20/3264230
139 Coleridge Close, Hitchin SG4 0QY

- 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 JP Uys against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02017/FPH, dated 8 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing detached single garage and construction of new 1.5 storey detached garage/storage accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on i) the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and ii) the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two-storey detached dwellinghouse at the end of a short cul-de-sac. Any garaging associated with neighbouring properties, I observed, are single garages, located to the side, and behind or in line with the elevation facing the street. Buildings are spaced out and set back from the public highway, providing a general appearance of openness.
4. The appeal property also has a single garage, but to the front and perpendicular to the original dwellinghouse. It is proposed to demolish this and replace with a much larger outbuilding: about 5.5m deep, 10m in length and rising to around height of 5.65m (accommodating an upstairs). This would be side-by-side the original dwellinghouse with only a very narrow, impassable gap separating them.
5. The proposed outbuilding, at almost double the height and more than triple the length of the existing garage cannot be considered diminutive, resulting in a size and mass of building not dissimilar to a dwellinghouse.

6. Due to its height, the proposed building would be clearly visible from both Coleridge Close and Gibson Close filling in much of the space between the appeal property and No. 138. Taken with the original dwellinghouse, I consider the proposal would result in a scale of development that would overwhelm the appeal property and the setting within the cul-de-sac thus causing significant harm to the surrounding area, compromising the pattern of plot density. The development is visible from the public realm and the presence of such outbuildings or large extensions is not widespread.
7. Therefore, the proposed development conflicts with policy 57 of North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations 2007 (Local Plan) and policy D2 of proposed North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (emerging Local Plan). Among other things, these require a high standard of design in development, including outbuildings, that relates to the character of the streetscene and surroundings. Similarly, creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Living conditions

8. The proposed outbuilding would be constructed near the boundary with neighbouring property at No. 138 and I have taken into account their submission. Occupants of that dwellinghouse already have a view of the existing garage within the appeal property, albeit not directly. This situation would be made no worse, the position and depth of the existing and proposed garages being similar, so their outlook would not be harmed.
9. The proposed development would result in an increase in the height of building at the boundary. However, I consider that the windows on the front of No. 138 are sufficiently far away so as not to be significantly affected by overshadowing or loss of daylight/sunlight.
10. Therefore, the development complies with emerging Local Plan policy D3. Among other things this requires that development not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.

Conclusion

11. Although the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers, it would harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Euan FS Pearson

INSPECTOR