



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 August 2025

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/D/25/3368377

Tall Timbers, 1B Melbourne Road, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 7DB

- 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 & Mrs Lee & Samantha Rogers against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref. is 25/00381/FPH.
 - The development proposed is for demolition of garage and conservatory and construction of side extension, loft conversion (addition of roof lights and dormer), removal of chimney and relocation of the front door with covered entrance.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the appeal proposal upon:
 - 1) the character and appearance of the area; and
 - 2) the living conditions of the occupants of 1A Melbourne Road, with specific reference to outlook, daylight, sunlight and noise.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site is located in a residential area to the east of Royston town centre; it is verdant in character, with many houses set well back from Melbourne Road with largely mature vegetation to the frontages screening principal elevations.
4. Tall Timbers is a gable fronted bungalow accessed via a private drive that also leads to Lansdown, 1C Melbourne Road, a detached chalet dwelling to the rear. The appeal site has a substantial gravel frontage as a result of recent landscaping works, which included the removal of vegetation.
5. There is no definitive building line along this section of Melbourne Road, although 1A and 1B, the former a one and a half storey house, are broadly in alignment with each other. 1 Melbourne Road (Coach House) to the south is more of an exception to the rule, it is more historic in character and has a two storey front gable projecting close to the back edge of the highway, due south of the appeal site.
6. The host dwelling is currently orientated at 90° within its plot, such that the main entrance door is on the southern elevation with the western gable elevation fronting

the main road, described as a side elevation it has a conservatory presently attached to it off of the existing lounge. The scheme seeks to change the internal ground floor configuration of the dwelling, in addition to the provision of a 5.2m deep extension to the western elevation, consequently bringing built form closer to the public highway, and with a front door to be provided under an open porch.

7. This internal reconfiguration appears logical bearing in mind that the main area of private amenity space serving the dwelling is to the east; and would still enable a significant area of driveway to the frontage to be retained. I therefore find that notwithstanding its length, the extension to the western elevation, by virtue of its design, scale and form would harmonise with the existing dwelling, street scene and the prevailing pattern of development within the locality, providing a stepped approach in regard to the siting of principal elevations from 1A through to 1 Melbourne Road.
8. However, the proposed box dormer would be constructed on the northern elevation of the existing roof and it would have a blank facade with a window identified to either end to provide natural light and ventilation to 2no shower rooms at first floor level. At 8.6m long and rising to the height of the main ridge, the box dormer would be visible from Melbourne Road especially from a point roughly in line with the driveway of 1A Melbourne Road and from the opposite side of the street. Overall, I consider that by virtue of its bulky and rather featureless appearance, it would detract from the existing simple roof form of the host dwelling creating an alien feature in a relatively publicly exposed location.
9. I acknowledge that the proposed dormer would be constructed in the same materials as the roof itself, however, that would not mitigate its sheer visual presence that, with respect, would appear to be a case of form following function. I consider that its overall scale would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. In coming to this conclusion, I have had regard to the presence of other dormers within the area, however those on No 1A, for example, are small in scale, but ultimately each case must be assessed on its own merits. I therefore find that in respect of the dormer, the proposal conflicts with Policies D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031(NHLP) which require development proposals to respond positively to the site's local context, ensuring that the extension is sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions and roof type.

Living Conditions

10. During my site visit I had an opportunity to view the appeal site from 1A Melbourne Road, and I have also had regard to the photographs submitted by all parties. No 1A has a bay window and French doors on the south facing elevation which serve a living room. The outlook from this would certainly be curtailed by the ground floor extension with current views above the intervening boundary fence across the frontage of the appeal site and towards the northern flank elevation of 1 Melbourne Road. Being due north/north west of the ground floor extension, the proposal would likely cause a degree of overshadowing and consequent loss of sunlight to the neighbouring property. I note the appellants comments that there would be no loss of light to no 1A, however, I have not been provided with any evidence to demonstrate that this would be the case. Furthermore, I acknowledge that there would have been some overshadowing caused by the trees that have since been removed from the site's frontage, but I have been provided with no detail as to what species they were of, or their size.

11. With regards to the proposed dormer, whilst there are a few trees in between the appeal site and no 1A, these are largely deciduous and consequently cannot be relied upon to obscure views of it all year round. However, whilst functional in its design, it would not be any higher than the ridge of the host dwelling, notwithstanding the fact that vertical built form would be brought closer to the shared boundary at first floor level. Having said that, there is a reasonable distance between the southern elevation of 1A and the southern boundary, consequently the effect upon the first floor bedroom windows of no1A would be limited by virtue of their elevated position. I therefore find, on balance, that the proposed box dormer would not have an overbearing effect upon the occupants of 1A Melbourne Road.
12. I therefore find that in respect of a lack of evidence to demonstrate otherwise, that the ground floor extension would give rise to a degree of overshadowing to the side ground floor bay window of no1A and the proposal conflicts with NHLP Policy D3 which only grants permission for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.
13. I acknowledge that the proposal would increase the living accommodation of the host dwelling which would render it as more attractive for family living, but that does not outweigh the harm that I have found above. I also acknowledge the appellants' frustration with regard to the manner in which they felt the Council determined the planning application, however that is not a determining factor in this appeal.
14. With regard to the proposed Air Source Heat Pump, I note that the proposed ground floor plan highlights an indicative location for such a unit which could well be deemed to be permitted development, providing that it complies with the MCS Planning Standards. Bearing in mind that it did not form part of the description of the proposed development and that no specific purported harm has been advanced by the Council in this respect, I consider that it does not form part of the appeal proposal; especially as I note that the Council's delegated report highlights that no objection is raised in principle to the proposed installation at ground floor level to the northern side elevation.

Conclusion

15. Having regard to the above and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR