



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2018

by J A B Gresty MA MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th January 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/D/18/3210202
7 Cambridge Road, North, Barley SG8 8HN

- 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 C George against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/01746/FPH, dated 2 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2018.
 - The development proposed is existing conservatory to be demolished and replaced with proposed garden room, existing garage converted to utility/study-office. Proposed carport/garage and entrance gates and garden fence to be erected.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for existing conservatory to be demolished and replaced with proposed garden room, existing garage converted to utility/study-office. Proposed carport/garage and entrance gates and garden fence to be erected at 7 Cambridge Road North, Barley SG8 8HN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 18/01746/FPH, dated 2 July 2018, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 13325-P001-A, 13325-P002 & 13325-S001.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a substantial, two-storey, detached house set back from the road behind a large front garden and driveway. The property is situated in a semi-rural location towards the edge of the village of Barley, in a line of houses on the south-east side of Cambridge Road. There is farmland to the rear of the houses and on the other side of the road.
4. The appeal proposal includes construction of a detached, single-storey garage building on the front driveway, in the northern corner of the front garden. The building would have a pitched, clay tiled roof and timber, feather-edge board cladding, which would contribute to the building having the character and

- appearance of a small, traditional style rural outbuilding. The design would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the other nearby houses on this part of Cambridge Road. The building would be small in comparison to the host dwelling and it would be in keeping with the size of the front garden and driveway.
5. Outbuildings and garages in front of the houses are not characteristic of this part of Cambridge Road and the front gardens contribute to this part of Cambridge Road having a spacious and leafy character and appearance when viewed from the road. Whilst the proposed garage building would be the only substantial building in front of the general building line of the line of houses, it would stand of ground about a metre below the level of the nearby road which would limit its visible height in the landscape when viewed from the road. Also, as a consequence of the gentle bend in the road, the building would have a backdrop of the two-storey houses when viewed from the road to the north and sloping garden land and trees when viewed from the south.
 6. Overall, whilst the proposed garage building would be the only significant structure forward of the building line on this part of Cambridge Road, as a consequence of its design, siting on land below the level of the road, the curve of the road and its relatively small size in relation to the host dwelling and plot, the proposed building would not stand out prominently in the local landscape and it would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the host property and the line of houses as a whole.
 7. Further, nearby towards the centre of the village on High Street, there are houses and buildings which stand close to the road. The nearest of these houses are visible from by the appeal property and relate strongly in the local landscape to the line of residential development on Cambridge Road. The proposed garage building would be some 5 metres or more from the side of the road and would be in keeping with the pattern of residential development nearby on High Street. The visual continuity of the proposed outbuilding with the nearby pattern of development on High Street would contribute to the proposed building being in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.
 8. The second main element of the appeal proposal is construction of a new single-storey garden room on the rear elevation of the appeal property and conversion of the small, integral single garage into habitable accommodation. At the time of inspection these works were largely complete and I concur with the Council that they are in keeping with the character and appearance of the host property. Similarly, the proposed fencing and gates would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

Conclusions

9. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. The proposed garage building would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the appeal property and local area. Further, the new garden room and conversion of the integral garage are in keeping with the host property and have very little impact on the character and appearance of the local area. Accordingly, in these respects the

proposed developments would represent sustainable development as sought by the Framework and comply with the requirements of Policies 28 and 57 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations Saved Policies – September 2007. Therefore, on balance and for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

10. For the sake of clarity, I impose a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
11. The Council has proposed that the materials used in the external surfaces of the new garden room and converted garage should match those of the host property. However, this aspect of the proposed development is all but complete, using materials which are in keeping with the host building and the application drawings indicate that materials would be used that match the host building. Accordingly, I consider such a condition is not necessary.
12. The Council has proposed that the materials used in the external surfaces of the proposed garage building should match those of the host property. However, the application drawings indicate that the garage building would clad with materials which would not match the host dwelling. Accordingly, such a condition would not be appropriate.

J A B Gresty

INSPECTOR