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PLANNING DEPARTMENT
DACORUM DISTRICT COUNCIL

B/1904/JM/P

20 SEP 1988

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER**

20 SEP 1988

File No
Refer to *cha/p*
Cleared

Your reference

135/86

Our reference

T/APP/A1910/A/88/088290/P4

Date

11 9 SEP 88

Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEAL BY MR WOODS
APPLICATION NO: 4/1260/87

1. As you know I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeal. This appeal is against the decision of the Dacorum District Council to refuse planning permission for 2 storey side extension, 15 Little Gaddesden, Herts. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the council and by the Little Gaddesden Parish Council and also those made by other interested persons. I inspected the site on 11 July 1988.

2. From my inspection of the site and surroundings, and from the representations made, I am of the opinion that the decision in this case turns upon first, whether the proposed development will be detrimental to the safe and free flow of traffic, and second, whether the proposed development will detract from the standard of residential amenity currently enjoyed by the residents of nearby properties, and third, whether it will detract from the character of a Conservation Area and the appearance of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3. The appeal site lies within the village of Little Gaddesden. The appeal building is an end-of-terrace cottage in a row of 3 cottages. Its northern boundary abuts the car park of the Bridgewater Arms Public House. To the west the cottage fronts onto the village street opposite the Bridgewater Arms. To the south lies the remainder of the terrace, and to the east there is well wooded countryside. The village lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the appeal building is within a Conservation Area.

4. The proposed development is a 2 storey side extension that would increase the frontage of the dwelling by some 3.7 m. The rear extension would project into the rear garden, and measures 5.5 m x 5.8 m. It would be of 2 storeys with its ridge set above that of the existing cottage. The council claim the existing floor area is 60 sq m, whereas that of the extension would be 73 sq m. A strip of land which varies from between one and 3 m width would be taken from the car park of the public house, and included in the curtilage of the cottage. This would reduce the number of parking spaces within the car park by 12.

5. On the first issue, the council point to the loss of 12 car parking spaces from the car park of the Bridgewater Arms. They consider that the existing car park is inadequate, and that the spaces lost will exacerbate an already unsatisfactory situation. The District Plan sets down car parking standards for dwellings. For a



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4 bedroom dwelling, 2 spaces are required. Although they are aware that the existing cottage has no car parking spaces, they consider that an extended dwelling should comply with this standard. They hold that these deficiencies in parking provision will result in additional traffic congestion in the village.

6. It appears to me that between 10 and 12 spaces will be lost from the car park. Further, as the layout of the car parking spaces would fall below normally accepted standards for car parks, I consider that the reduction in available parking spaces could exceed 12. Apart from the village street, the only place where the occupants of the enlarged dwelling will be able to park their cars is the car park to the Bridgewater Arms, thus further reducing the number of spaces available within it.

7. I consider that the loss of these car parking spaces will result in patrons parking on the highway. Further, I regard it as being likely that the occupants of a 4 bedroomed dwelling will possess 2 cars, both of which they will be obliged to park on the highway when the Bridgewater Arms car park is fully utilised. I observed that the village street is relatively narrow. In my opinion to park cars along it will pose a hazard to the safe and free flow of traffic. This hazard will be exacerbated by patrons walking between the public house and their cars. I have therefore reached the conclusion that the proposed development will be detrimental to the safe and free flow of traffic.

8. On the second issue, the council consider that the very substantial increase in bulk of the cottage will cause it to dominate the adjoining dwellings together with their gardens. Your neighbour at No 16 is concerned that the extension will overshadow his patio. You dispute that the proposed extension will have any adverse effect upon the residential amenities possessed by the adjoining dwellings.

9. I consider that the proposed extension will take light from your neighbour's patio for a very small part of the day. However, it will enclose and dominate it, detracting from his enjoyment of it. The extensions to the other cottages in the terrace will tend to ameliorate the overbearing appearance of the proposed extension when seen from them. However, it will be dominant when viewed from the eastern end of their gardens, though probably not to an unacceptable degree. At present No 15 Little Gaddesden does not have any significant windows in its rear elevation above the ground floor. The proposed extension has several windows, and these will overlook the eastern end of the gardens of the adjoining dwellings. This overlooking will bring about a marginal diminution in their standard of residential amenity.

10. In my opinion, the on-street parking and the additional pedestrian movements resulting from the loss of parking spaces in the Bridgewater Arms car park will cause both nuisance due to cars being parked outside houses, and disturbance generated by the noise of vehicles stopping and starting. Further, the lack of parking spaces attached to the cottage will cause further on-street parking, and exacerbating these problems. I have therefore reached the conclusion that the proposed development will detract from the standard of residential amenity currently enjoyed by the residents of this part of the village.

11. On the third issue, the District Plan requires that the design of development in conservation areas should pay due regard to the character of the conservation area as a whole. Further, the plan requires that special regard be paid to the design of buildings in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The council consider that the proposed extension does not comply with these policies because it is massive and overbearing in relation to both the existing dwelling and

the surrounding area. You argue that the extension has been designed to be in keeping with the original cottage.

12. Little Gaddesden is a very attractive street village, which was an estate village to the Ashridge estate. It comprises small cottages, many of which were rebuilt or refaced in an estate style during the nineteenth century. Interspersed among these are a few larger houses, of which the Bridgewater Arms is one. I regard the village as being of considerable architectural and historical importance, both intrinsically and in relation to the Ashridge Estate. The village lies in the Chiltern Hills, and its unspoilt visual character makes a major contribution to the character and appearance of the landscape of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. I therefore regard it as being a matter of considerable importance that the appearance and character of the village is not damaged by unsympathetic developments.

13. The appeal building is one of 3 cottages. These have a brick facade in a self conscious cottage style, typical of estate architecture of the period. The main body is one room deep, with an outshot to the rear. My examination of the interior revealed that the appeal building was a timber framed house of considerable interest and antiquity. The form of the framing, box with curved braces, and the roof structure, suggests that it dates back to circa 1600, or even earlier. It is apparently half of a lobby entrance house, the adjoining cottage representing the remainder of this building. It, together with the adjoining cottages, forms a very attractive group with the Bridgewater Arms, a listed building. Together they set the character of the approach into the village from the north. I have therefore concluded that this building is of considerable importance with respect to the appearance, history and character of the conservation area. Architecturally, it is important both in its own right and with respect to the Ashridge Estate.

14. I consider that both the side extension and the rear extension would swamp the existing form of the cottage. I regard this as being particularly damaging to the appearance of the conservation area here, as it disrupts the contrast between the small cottage with an outshot to its rear, and the imposing Bridgewater Arms Public House. Further, it would lend to the facade facing towards the Bridgewater Arms a particularly unfortunate suburban character. The loss of the form of this building damages both its historical and architectural integrity, and that of the conservation area. In my opinion, such damage is wholly unacceptable in the context of the building, this important Conservation Area, and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Further, I find that the details of the design detract from the architectural integrity of the terrace. The projecting ridge is unfortunate, and the windows do not correspond to the character of the existing windows.

15. I have therefore reached the conclusion that the proposed extension will detract from the character of a Conservation Area and the appearance of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

16. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me I hereby dismiss this appeal.

I am Sir

Your obedient Servant

Geoffrey S. S. Lane

GEOFFREY S S LANE DiplArch DiplTP RIBA MRTPI
Inspector