

Appeal Decision

Site visit made 30 January 2025

By Ruth Reed BA DipArch MA PGCertEd PPRIBA HonAIA FRIAS

An Independent Scheme of Management Inspector
Appointed by the Heritage Foundation Letchworth Garden City

Decision date 10 February 2025

Appeal Reference RR/2025/019

6 South View, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 3JH

- The appeal is made by _____ against refusal of consent under the Scheme of Management of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation for the application submitted on 17 April 2024.
- Consent for the scheme was refused by the Heritage Advisory Service on 16 May 2024. It was referred to the Heritage Foundation's Advisory Management Committee on 4 September 2024. The Committee suggested changes and requested that the refusal be reconsidered. It was reviewed by the Householder Applications Committee on 18 October 2024 and the decision to refuse was upheld.
- The development proposed is: part single, part two storey rear extensions, new side first floor windows, front garage door and alterations to garage door opening, insertion of roof lights.

Decision

1. The appeal against the refusal of an application for part single, part two storey rear extensions, new side first floor windows and insertion of roof lights is dismissed. The appeal is allowed in respect to the proposed changes to the front garage door and alterations to garage door opening.

Preliminary matters

2. It was confirmed at the site visit that the house is a Home of Special Interest.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in this case are the impact of the proposals on the appearance of the house, the impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, and the impact of the alterations on the character of the area.

Reasons

6. 6 South View is a detached dwelling linked by its garage to 8 South View. It is in a Heritage Character Area. It is of brick with a tiled, hipped roof and a two-storey front gable projection.
7. The house is identified as a Home of Special Interest as it is a Heritage Character Area home that retains many original features.
8. To the rear there is a conservatory extension across half the width of the elevation. The rear garden is small for the area and backs onto 4 Meadow Way which has garden of similar depth. Both are the first properties on their roads and flank an area of open space that is a buffer between the residential area and the road around Broadway Gardens.
9. The proposed scheme is for a new two-storey rear extension with a cat-slide roof over a single storey rear extension that would replace the conservatory. The proposed extension would be no further from the original house wall than the existing conservatory. However, as it would be across the full width of the rear elevation of the house it would occupy more of the limited garden space.
10. The proposal would result in the loss of a chimney. The Design Principles for the Heritage Character Area state: *Other than in exceptional circumstances, existing chimneys stacks or pots should not be removed.* Loss of the chimney would be harmful to the Home of Special Interest.
11. The cat-slide roof would require the window to the rear bedroom renumbered bedroom 3, to be relocated closer to the side wall and reduced in size by a half. To increase the amount of light reaching this room a rooflight is proposed together with an additional rooflight closer to the ridge. These changes to the fenestration are harmful to the appearance of the original house unbalancing the rear elevation.
12. To avoid overlooking 4 Meadow Way from the new bedroom in the extension, there would be a window in the flank wall of the extension. There would also be additional windows at first floor added to the flank wall of the existing house to the new en-suite shower room and the renumbered bedroom 4.

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13. The existing roof is a double hip facing the area of open space. The rear hip would be extended, changing the form of the roof when viewed from the open space and the adjacent roads.
14. In most situations these changes would not be significant but 6 South View is at the beginning of the residential street and visible from a distance from the public amenity spaces. The increase in depth of the flank wall and the roof, the loss of the chimney, together with the introduced windows would have a significant impact on the appearance of the house viewed from Broadway Gardens.
15. At the moment the flank walls of the two houses, 6 South View and 4 Meadow Way facing the public open space have relatively simple forms and uncluttered elevations.
16. It had been suggested that stepping the new extension in to break up the flank elevation would reduce the impact of the increased bulk however it is my opinion that it would increase the visual complexity and be detrimental to the townscape.
17. The roads radiate out from Broadway Gardens and the splay created causes the rear elevations of 6 South View and 4 Meadow Way to be unusually close together. The gap between the two properties is a significant element in the townscape at this key node within the town.
18. The proposed extension would bring the two houses even closer together at the narrowest point and although increased overlooking would be avoided, 6 South View would become more dominant in the outlook from 4 Meadow Way. A substantial boundary hedge separates the two properties, reducing the intervisibility but any decision cannot rely on the hedge remaining in perpetuity.
19. The appellant drew my attention to properties further down South View that have larger two-storey extensions. However, the radiating road layout results in a much greater back-to-back distance with the properties on Meadow View as the properties run southeast and there is no clear view of their extended flank walls from any public viewpoint. The situation is not equivalent.
20. The location of this Home of Special Interest within the townscape of the Garden City requires sensitivity in the approach to change. The Design Principles state: *The Design Principles generally indicate what will and will not be acceptable. However, each case will be considered on its own merits assessing the impact of your proposals on the character and quality of the subject property and its context.* In this case the proposals would be harmful to the house and its location.

Conclusions

21. Having read the submissions and seen the site and its context, I conclude that the proposed part single, part two storey rear extension, new side first floor windows and insertion of rooflights would be harmful to the Home of Special Interest and the Townscape of Letchworth Garden City. The appeal is dismissed for these elements of the proposal.
22. The proposed changes to the front garage door and alterations to the garage door opening would be acceptable. The appeal is allowed in respect to these aspects of the proposal.

Ruth Reed

Independent Scheme of Management Inspector