

Raymond Stemp Associates

Planning and Development Consultants



Planning Applications • Planning Appeals • Architectural Design

Replacement Executive Home Allowed in Ramsden Bellhouse

RSA was instructed to prepare a design for a large executive home as a replacement for a small bungalow and outbuildings in Ramsden Park Road, Ramsden Bellhouse. The proposed dwelling consisted of five bedrooms and the accommodation was arranged over three floors.

Policy BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan sets out criteria for new residential development. It states that permission will not be granted for proposals that would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding residential area, give rise to overshadowing or be over-dominant. Policy BAS BE13 sets out criteria for new development within the settlement of Ramsden Bellhouse. This generally restricts new dwellings to bungalows and chalets, and includes guidance in

respect of plot widths and distance from boundaries.

Basildon District Council refused planning permission on the grounds that the proposals were not in accordance with the Special Development Control Policy for the area and therefore would harm the character and appearance of the area. The applicant company instructed RSA to appeal against the decision of the Council.

The Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the hearing and to determine the appeal was Lesley Coffey. She observed that many of the dwellings in the road adopted a chalet style approach in terms of design and she was of the opinion that whilst this reduced the overall scale and bulk, the dwellings nevertheless have the appearance of large two storey houses, rather than bungalows. She stated in her decision letter that she observed many dwellings similar in scale

within the Ramsden Bellhouse area.

In assessing the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area she concluded that while the proposals would not comply with policy BAS BE13, they would not harm the area. In assessing the impact of the proposals on the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers the Inspector noted that the outlook from the rear of the neighbouring properties would change, but the proposed dwelling would not be so prominent as to have an overbearing effect on either of the adjoining occupants.

She also noted that the removal of many of the outbuildings that currently occupy the rear of the site would improve the outlook from the neighbouring dwellings.

The Inspector concluded that the appeal should be allowed subject to a number of conditions.

An image of the front elevation of the proposal allowed at appeal can be found below.



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Appeal: Change of Use of an Annexe to a Private Dwelling House

The appeal related to the change of use of an annexe at Rembrandt House, Blasford Hill, Little Waltham into a private dwelling house. The appeal building was formerly a garage and sited within the existing curtilage of a detached house. It occupies a position close to the site's boundary fronting onto the B1008 and is within a ribbon of development along the roadside at this point. Planning permission was granted in 2007 for the building's conversion into annexed accommodation to be occupied for residential purposes ancillary to Rembrandt House. This planning permission allowed for a reasonably generous amount of ancillary living space over 2 floors. The approved layout included an open plan living area with kitchen

fittings to one side and a separate room with an en-suite shower at ground floor level, with a centrally positioned bathroom and living space to each side at first floor level.

A planning application for the use of the building as a private dwelling house was refused by Chelmsford Council. RSA was instructed by the Applicant to appeal the decision of the Council.

The Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to determine the appeal was John Allen. He identified that the main issue in the appeal was whether the creation of an independent dwelling unit would compromise adopted policies that seek to safeguard the character and appearance of the rural area and

the Green Wedge in which the appeal site is located.

The Inspector was not persuaded by the Council's arguments that independent occupation of the building would alter its impact upon the openness, appearance or character of the area. The Inspector concluded that the overall impact of the building would be neutral in comparison to the nature and scale of the building's permitted use. He was therefore unable to detect any significant harm such that the proposal would materially conflict with the primary aim of protecting the countryside for its own sake.

The Planning Inspector granted planning permission subject to conditions.



Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development Risks Confusion

The Environmental Audit Committee have raised concern regarding the presumption in favour of sustainable development that is included within the draft National Planning Policy Framework.

The committee claim that a sufficient or clear definition of sustainable development is not provided and this risks the likelihood of legal challenges.

The Committee also appear concerned that this presumption, will act too strongly in the developer's favour and not sufficiently protect the countryside and Green Belt.

However, the matter of sustainability is highly controversial in terms of definition and interpretation. The extent sustainability should focus upon environmental matters,

economic viability or social matters deviates depending on the audience and their stance.

The extent a balance between conflicting matters of sustainability can be achieved will only be visible following implementation. This is consequently yet to be seen, as and when a version of the document is formally adopted.



House of Commons
Environmental Audit
Committee



Draft National Planning Policy Framework

Extension Allowed in Gillingham, Kent

The Applicants applied for a two storey side extension to their dwelling which is located on a corner junction of Capel Close. This follows a previous planning application for a similar extension which was refused by the Council and also dismissed on appeal. Following a meeting with the planning officer the scheme was revised but the Council maintained its reasons for refusal of planning permission.

RSA was instructed by the Appellants to lodge an appeal against the Council's decision. The Planning Inspector appointed to determine the appeal was Mr D Cramond. He considered that the siting and design of the extension would be such that it would not be an overbearing or prominent built form in the streetscene. He noted that there would be sufficient set-back off the footway, a height reduction

from the principal dwelling and a step-in from the front elevation at first floor level to prevent any sense of a claustrophobic scene being caused. The Inspector considered that a generous spaciousness would remain around the corner of the site by reason of the open areas remaining and the subservient nature of the extension. He concluded that the appeal site would satisfactorily absorb the

mass and bulk of development which has been designed to address concerns over the previous scheme.

The appeal was allowed subject to conditions.

