
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2016

by S J Papworth DipArch(Glos) RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 22 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/16/3154283
The Palms, Lewes Road, Lindfield RH16 2LG

- 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 Matt and Hannah Wright against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/16/1461, dated 2 April 2016, was refused by the Council by notice dated 26 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is extension and alterations to a 3 bedroom dwelling with attached garage to create a 4 bedroom dwelling with detached garage.
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main Issue

2. This is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Lewes Road area of Lindfield.

Reasons

3. Policy B1 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan seeks a high standard of design, construction and layout. All proposals for development will be required to demonstrate a sensitive approach to urban design by respecting the character of the locality in which they take place, especially to neighbouring buildings, their landscape or townscape setting and the regional and/or local building style. Policy H9 states that when determining applications for extensions and alterations within the built-up areas, proposals will be required to meet criteria that include (a) the design, size and scale of the extension is in keeping with the existing dwelling; (b) the design, size and scale of the extension is in keeping with the surrounding dwellings and does not have an adverse impact on the character of the locality; (c) the proposal does not result in an overbearing or unneighbourly form of development detrimental to the amenities of nearby residents; and (d) the character and style of the existing property is retained or improved.
 4. The Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 has been 'made' and is therefore part of the Development Plan covering the appeal site location, there are no policies relevant to the application since the site is within the settlement boundary. Emerging Policy DP24 of the Mid Sussex District Plan Pre-Submission Draft sets out similar requirements to the adopted District-wide policies.
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5. Paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment; good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
6. The property is set back from Lewes Road with only a narrow entry between *Linden Chalet* within the Lindfield Conservation Area and *Vores Oak* outside the designated area, as is the site itself. The building is a low bungalow set in a spacious plot, the full extent of which is not obvious from surrounding roads, and the low form of the building does not appear as backland development in many views either. Whilst the Development Plan policies set out criteria for design, it is clear that there is scope under H9(d) for improving an existing situation, and the existing bungalow is somewhat unremarkable in its design.
7. However, the proposed enlargement, whilst being on the same footprint as existing with the garage taken into the living accommodation and replaced with a detached structure to the south, would involve a significant increase in height due to the design of the mono-pitch roof to cover the proposed second floor of accommodation. This form and treatment of the roof-scape would be substantially different to anything in the near vicinity.
8. Although the composition appears well-considered and in itself attractive, in this situation it would appear as an intrusive form seen to the rear of more conventional buildings that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, an area protected under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
9. Of particular concern to the Council is the flat-roofed element to the south-west corner, stated in the Report to be akin to a flat-roofed dormer. This metal-clad element would be away from the conservation area but would be clearly seen in views over the open land to *Vores Oak* between it and the car repair garage, and would introduce a particularly jarring form to the otherwise pitched roofed buildings nearby.
10. While there is no policy objection to improving the accommodation and architectural treatment of the unassuming bungalow, its location militates against the design and treatment chosen in this instance, it being too assertive as a backland development, detracting from views into the nearby conservation area and the character and appearance of the Lewes Road area.
11. The proposal may be considered to be of a high standard of architectural design and an improvement to the bungalow as it stands, but in this location the design fails to reach the standard of urban design required by Policies B1 and H9, not respecting the character of the locality, especially neighbouring buildings, their landscape or townscape setting. The proposal in this context does not accord with the aims of paragraph 56 of the Framework. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Papworth

INSPECTOR