

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2017

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P1425/D/16/3165824

Springfields, Ditchling Road, Wivelsfield RH17 7RF

- 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 Peter Burton against the decision of Lewes District Council.
 - The application Ref LW/16/0804, dated 19 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is first floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for first floor extension at Springfields, Ditchling Road, Wivelsfield RH17 7RF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref LW/16/0804, dated 19 September 2016, 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 approved plans 257800-01, 257800-04 and 257800-05.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the development herein permitted shall match those of the existing property.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The large bungalow known as Springfield is located within the countryside, at the end of a long track, behind existing road frontage development. To the north and west of the appeal site are tall trees that provide a backdrop to the dwelling when viewed from the access track. I observed buildings relating to a former industrial estate to the south of the dwelling. A small agricultural paddock and horticultural nursery are situated either side of the access track. The road frontage dwellings are mainly two-storey detached properties with the exception of a bungalow to their rear located south east of the appeal site.
 4. Policy RES13 requires all extensions to be subsidiary to the existing building. Policy RES14 indicates that extensions to existing dwellings outside planning boundaries in excess of 50% of the original floorspace will not normally be
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- permitted. The supporting text explains that this is to prevent loss of character to the main building.
5. The dwelling has previously been extended and the Council highlights that this extension, taken cumulatively with previous extensions to the bungalow, would increase the overall size to approximately 170% over and above the original building. This would be in breach of this policy. However, the previous extensions have already increased the size of the original dwelling by around 77% which is also in excess of what the policy indicates. Therefore, Policy RES14 has already been breached.
 6. However, I must also consider the further incremental enlargement to this dwelling in relation to its character and that of the wider landscape. The previous extensions have substantially enlarged the original dwelling. This would have significantly altered the character and appearance of the original dwelling. Although the bungalow is located away from any existing dwellings and, for this reason is isolated, the appeal site is screen by tall existing trees to its north and western sides. I observed that the dwelling is set at a lower level to the access track. Whilst the enlarged dwelling would be visible from the access track, the trees along the boundary of the property would provide screening. The enlarged dwelling would not be extensively apparent in viewpoints from the wider countryside or when viewed from the footpath to the north and west the appeal site. I see no reason why a two-storey dwelling would not appear acceptable in this location.
 7. Taking all relevant considerations into account, including Policy ST3 which requires developments, in more general terms, to respect neighbouring buildings and the local area, the proposal would be an acceptable extension to the already enlarged dwelling. As noted above, the trees to the north and west of the appeal site would contain the proposed development to more localised views from the access track. Further tree screening in the vicinity also would provide additional screening from wider views. The proposal would not create significant further harm to the wider landscape. Whilst the size of the proposed extension would be a further breach and would go against the spirit of Policy RES14, in my judgement, taking all relevant matters into consideration, I find the proposed development acceptable in this particular case.
 8. I acknowledge that there is an outline planning permission in place for 31 dwellings that would alter the character of the landscape adjacent to the appeal site. However, the proposal should be considered on its own merit regardless of any adjoining development that may take place in the future.
 9. Overall, I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area and, for the reasons given, would not materially conflict with Policies ST3, RES13 and RES14 of the Lewes District Local Plan.

Conditions

10. I have considered the planning conditions suggested by the Council in light of paragraph 206 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the standard time limit condition and in the interests of certainty it is appropriate that there is a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved

plans. A condition relating to matching materials is appropriate in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR