

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 3 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/D/16/3161906

3 Wayte Cottages, Chidham Lane, Chidham, Chichester PO18 8TQ

- 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 Stephan Schmidtschneider against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application, Ref. CH/16/00806/DOM, dated 2 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as '*a new rear facing dormer window*' but see paragraph 2 below.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for two new rear facing dormer windows at 3 Wayte Cottages, Chidham Lane, Chidham, Chichester in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. CH/16/00806/DOM, dated 2 March 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision;
 - 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. (pl)01; (pl)02; (pl)03; (sk)05d;
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. The descriptions of the proposed development on the application and appeal forms and the Notice of Refusal refer to a dormer window in the singular. I have therefore amended the description in my Decision to reflect that the appeal proposal is for two dormers.
 3. The appellant has requested that the appeal should be determined on plans that include a revised drawing submitted at the time of the appeal (No. (sk)05d). As this plan only shows additional information to clarify matters and does not change the proposal from that refused by the Council I have agreed to this request.
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Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dormers on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the adjoining cottages and the wider landscape designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

5. I saw on my visit that Wayte Cottages comprise two pairs of semi-detached cottages. Nos. 1 & 2 are different in a number of respects to Nos. 3 and 4 with variations to both front and rear elevations, but each pair has its own symmetry. There are also shared characteristics between the pairs, including unaltered rear roof slopes other than rooflights in Nos. 1 and 3, with the result that there is a degree of symmetry between all the dwellings. All four cottages back on to flat agricultural land that forms part of the Chichester Harbour AONB and are prominent in views from Chidham Lane when travelling northwards to the A259. Immediately to the west of the group is 'Mardon', a chalet bungalow in a large plot with large dormers to the front and rear.
6. Within the main issue, the Council's concern is twofold. Firstly it is considered that the proposed dormers are disproportionately large and would dominate the roof, and secondly that their introduction to the building would 'break' the symmetry the pair.
7. On the first point, I am unable to agree with the Council's assessment that the proposed dormers would 'be excessively large and dominate the roof'. This may well have been a reasonable assessment in respect of the previously proposed single dormer, but in the amended scheme the only part of the dormers close to the edge of the roof slope is the apex of the gable, and this has minimal bulk. The main part of the structures is the encasement of the glazed area and this is well below the ridge and above the eaves and set away from the hip and the party wall with No. 4. As the Grounds of Appeal point out, the dormers compare favourably with Figure 1 of the Council's Planning Guidance Note 3: 'Design Guide for Alterations to Dwellings and Extensions (revised 2009)' illustrating symmetrical and subordinate dormer windows.
8. The second point, the effect on symmetry, is more finely balanced as in views from the south the roof slope of the pair of cottages is read as a single entity and to some extent also read with the roof of Nos. 1 and 2. None of the four roofs have had additions, with only roof lights to facilitate the accommodation. However, the cottages are not subject to the constraints of being listed buildings, located in a conservation area, or forming part of a street scene. Furthermore, the symmetry of the pair of Nos. 3 & 4, and (allowing for the original design differences) the perceived symmetry with Nos. 1 & 2, has already been substantially compromised by the ground floor additions to the appeal property.
9. The nub of this matter is therefore whether the introduction of proportionately sized dormers on one of the four cottages would have an unacceptable effect on the AONB landscape. On balance I consider that it would not, because of a combination of three reasons: (i) as the dormers are not disproportionate they would not draw the eye as an inappropriate or obtrusive addition; (ii) the perception of a high quality landscape would not be altered by an alteration seen only in the context and massing of the existing building and not in

isolation and (iii) in terms of the relationship between roof forms and the surrounding countryside, the much larger dormer windows of the adjoining 'Mardon' (and arguably also the nearby 'Fieldgate' and 'St Anns') already have a visual impact at least equal to that now proposed.

10. Overall, I conclude that the proposed dormers would not have an unacceptably adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the adjoining cottages and the wider landscape of the AONB. There would therefore be no conflict with Policies 33 & 43 of the Chichester District Local Plan Policies: Key Policies 2014-2029; the aforementioned Design Guide; the Design Guidelines for New Dwellings and Extensions in the Chichester Harbour AONB (revised 2010), and the core planning principles and relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
11. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. A condition requiring matching external materials will ensure that the dormers are in keeping with the existing dwelling and thereby maintain visual amenity.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR