

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 April 2017

by Clive Tokley MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/16/3165129

Whitesands, Lewes Road, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, RH16 2LQ.

- 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 Nicholas Drage against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/16/3747 dated 27 July 2016 was refused by notice dated 17 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as side and rear two storey extension.
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Application for Costs

An application for costs was made Mr Nicholas Drage against Mid Sussex District Council. That application is the subject of a separate decision.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for side and rear two storey extension, single storey rear extensions and front porch extension at Whitesands, Lewes Road, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, RH16 2LQ. The permission is in accordance with the terms of the application ref DM/16/3747 dated 27 July 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) Subject to condition 3 below the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: ND/1, ND/2A, ND/3A and ND/4A.
 - 3) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the roofs of the extensions hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Introduction and Main Issue

2. The description of the application refers only to the side and rear two-storey extensions and makes no mention of the single storey extensions at the rear or the enlargement of the front porch. The officer report refers to all of these elements and indicates that with the exception of the side extension they are
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compliant with “policy requirements”. I have no reason to disagree with the Council’s judgement on the aspects of the proposal that it finds acceptable. I have determined the appeal on the basis that all of the extensions and alterations indicated on the drawings are the subject of this appeal.

3. The main issue is the effect of the two storey side extension on the character and appearance of the area including the setting of the Lindfield Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Lindfield Conservation Area (the CA) is focussed on the linear core of the village around High Street, Black Hill and the northern end of Lewes Road including the picturesque village pond close to point where the roads meet. The CA extends to the south to include the extensive grassed area of Lindfield Common on which there are sports pitches and courts. To the south of the village core the boundary of the CA runs along Lewes Road. Although outside the CA the houses to the east fronting Lewes Road form a backdrop to CA and are part of the setting of the heritage asset.
5. Whitesands lies outside the CA at the southern end of a varied frontage of detached and semi-detached houses on the east side of Lewes Road at its junction with Noahs Ark Lane. The boundary of the CA is coincident with the front boundaries of the houses and the junction marks the south eastern extremity of the CA. Noahs Ark Lane serves a mid to late C20th residential area containing mainly short terraces and semi-detached houses. The relatively modern detached appeal house is of a similar character to the houses in Noahs Ark Lane and it contrasts with the timber clad two-range cottage on the south side of the junction which appears to pre-date the estate housing to the east.
6. The width of the carriageway and swept radii of the Noahs Ark Lane junction are not characteristic of the CA or the immediately adjacent areas where most side roads are narrower and buildings (on at least one side) are closer to the highway. The sense of openness of the junction is constrained by the recently-erected close-boarded fencing at Whitesands. The extension would narrow the space between the buildings at the junction but being set back behind the fence it would not encroach into an unenclosed open area.
7. From the south eastern edge of the Common, within the CA, the appeal dwelling partly frames the view into the more modern housing area. The proposal would screen the limited view of houses on the north side of Noahs Ark Lane and trees in the rear garden of Whitesands; however the change in outlook from the CA would have no effect on its significance as a heritage asset.
8. The proposal would narrow views into the CA from Noahs Ark Lane to the east where the trees on the Common are seen between Whitesands and No 11 West View Cottages (on the west side of Lewes Road). However taking account of the shallow bends in the road the effect would be very limited. The view from Noahs Ark Lane into the CA would change but from this direction the proposal would have no harmful effect on its setting or its significance as a heritage asset.
9. When approaching the village along Lewes Road the flank wall of the proposal would be seen in conjunction with the Common; however I consider that its

appearance would represent an improvement on the existing unattractive single storey element at the side of the house.

10. The proposed extensions, replacement windows and rendered walls would change the character of the host dwelling. However the front gable would reflect those at Sturrow Cottage to the north and I consider that the resultant dwelling would be appropriately designed for this area. The Parish Council raises concern about the extent of white render which would contrast with the prevailing mix of render, brickwork and hanging tiles along the east side of Lewes Road. However I saw a number of predominantly white-finished buildings (timber boarding and render) within and adjacent to the CA and I consider that the proposed rendered walls would not detract from the character or appearance of the area.
11. The application form indicates that the proposed roof would be finished in slate whereas the drawings indicate that it would be tiled to match the existing. This matter is not resolved within the officer report and the appellant's appeal documents offer no clarification. I agree with the officer report that slates would be acceptable in this location as part of a complete re-roofing of the building; however I consider that tiles to match the existing house would also be acceptable. In the light of the uncertainty and taking account of the location of the site next to the CA I have imposed a condition requiring that details of the materials to be used for the roofs of the proposal shall be submitted to the Council for approval.
12. Overall I consider that the proposal would not materially reduce the spaciousness of the junction and would not detract from the character or appearance of the area. It would have a neutral effect on the setting of the CA. The proposal would not conflict with Policies B1, B15 and H9 of the *Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004* or Policies DP24 and DP33 of the *Mid Sussex District Plan (Submission Version) 2014 – 2031* which have similar objectives as regards design and the respect to be given to conservation areas and their settings.

Conditions

13. In addition to a condition requiring the approval of roofing materials I have imposed the normal conditions governing the commencement of development and identifying the approved drawings.

Conclusion

14. Taking account of all matters I have concluded that the proposal would not detract from the character or appearance of the area, including the setting of the Lindfield Conservation Area, and that the appeal should succeed.

Clive Tokley

INSPECTOR