

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 April 2017

by C J Leigh BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/D/17/3169368

Corner House, Brighton Road, Monks Gate, Horsham, RH13 6JD

- 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 Peter Owen against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/2688, dated 23 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The property is one half of pair of small cottages fronting Brighton Road, on the corner of Nuthurst Road. There are long views towards the property along these roads, and across the open side and rear gardens to the house. To the south is another pair of small cottages, which have evidently been extended in the past.
 4. The proposed side extension would be two storey, with a small set-back from the line of the existing front elevation, though with the rear elevation and ridge of the existing house continued across into the extension. A rear dormer is proposed to the new extension, and to the existing property, and a small front porch associated with a repositioning of the main entrance to the new extension.
 5. I share the concerns of the District Council and the Parish Council regarding the size of this extension, the details of its design, and the relationship to the host property and its attached neighbour. The width of the extension, when combined with the height and minimal set-back from the front elevation, would create an addition that overwhelms the modest scale of the original cottage and its attached neighbour. The alterations to the front elevation – with the creation of a new porched entrance on the new extension rather than the original house, and the provision of two windows at first floor with just one in the main house – would emphasise this imbalance between the excessive scale
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of the new extension and the more intimate nature of the pair of cottages. The over-powering nature of the extended property would be readily apparent in views from the front, rear and side of the house.

6. Policies 25, 28 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and Policy 10 of the Nuthurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031, set out a requirement for new development to, in general terms, be of a high quality design. This includes a requirement in Policy 28 of the Local Plan that extensions at existing dwellings be in keeping with the scale and character of the existing property. I acknowledge the appellant's point that merely designing by 'standards' is not always appropriate in securing good design. However, in this instance it is apparent to me that the Council have carefully considered the various elements of the proposed works and the effect on the character of the existing property and the wider area. For the reasons given I concur with their assessment that those elements mean the extension would be harmful.
7. I note that other properties in the vicinity have been extended. This includes 1 Southland Cottages to the south. This does not illustrate the problems arising with the current proposals, since the extension is set back from the front elevation and from the ridgeline and roofslope which, together with the restrained fenestration of a small window and no repositioned main entrance, means that extension is subservient to the pair of cottages. Extensions to other properties are similarly subservient and appropriate. Hence, those examples do not change the conclusions arising in relation to the appeal scheme. Other appeal examples cited by the appellant for sites further from the appeal location have little relevance to this case: I have determined the proposed extension in the context of the character of the appeal property and the location within which it lies.
8. The appellant has referred me to allocation of land to the rear of the appeal site under Policy 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan. This does not change the status of the appeal site's location within the countryside and the relevance of the design policies referred to earlier. I note that in the recent planning permission granted for that allocated site the layout show housing set back from Nuthurst Road, with a deep landscaped barrier, and so it is apparent to me that the general setting of the appeal property and views towards it and the pair of cottages will be little altered in the future.
9. On the first issue it is therefore concluded that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This would be contrary to the policies referred to earlier, and so the appeal is dismissed.

C J Leigh

INSPECTOR