

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 June 2017

by **S M Holden BSc MSc CEng MICE TPP FCIHT MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 29th June 2017

Appeal A Ref: APP/D3830/W/17/3170874

2 Charlwoods Place, East Grinstead RH19 2HY

- 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 Brad North of Autarky Automation Ltd against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/16/3152, dated 24 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as: "roof alterations to raise the existing height of ridge by 4meters, and internal alterations to provide mezzanine storage space at Autarky Automation Limited, Charlwoods Place East Grinstead".
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Appeal B Ref: APP/D3830/W/17/3170905

2 Charlwoods Place, East Grinstead RH19 2HY

- 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 Brad North of Autarky Automation Ltd against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/16/5267, dated 30 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as: "roof alterations to raise the existing height of ridge by 4meters, and internal alterations to provide mezzanine storage space at Autarky Automation Limited, Charlwoods Place East Grinstead".
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Decisions

1. Appeals A and B are dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The elevation drawings in relation to both appeals describe the front of the building as the 'west elevation' and the rear as the 'east elevation'. However, the parties have confirmed that the rear elevation is in fact on the western side of the building. I have referred to it as such throughout these decisions.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in relation to both appeals is the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of adjacent properties in relation to outlook and sense of enclosure.

Reasons

4. Autarky Automation Ltd occupies a substantial single-story building which is close to the rear boundaries of residential properties in Willow Close. Its long western elevation occupies the full width of the gardens of Nos 5-13 and
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approximately half the width of No 15's garden. The existing building has a very shallow pitched roof and the eaves on the western elevation are about 4m high. Although the building can be seen above the fences that enclose these nearby rear gardens, its low profile ensures that it is not visually intrusive. Both proposals seek to replace the roof, increasing the height of the building by 4m across its full width and introducing a more steeply pitched roof. The extension would enable the introduction of a mezzanine floor in the building to provide additional storage for the business.

Appeal A

5. With Appeal A the proposal would also increase the eaves height at the rear of the building by about 1.8m. The two-storey dwellings in Willow Close are typical of small houses dating from the 1960s set in modest-sized plots. Nos 1-7 is a short terrace and Nos 9-15 comprise two pairs of semis. With the exception of No 15, which is on a larger triangular-shaped plot, these houses have small rear gardens. No 13 is only 15m from the rear of the factory and although No 5 is 24m from the building its garden is significantly narrower.
6. The additional height and bulk of the building, combined with the increased eaves height and the introduction of a taller and more steeply pitched roof, would introduce a significant sense of enclosure into all these rear gardens. Whilst Nos 5 and 15 would retain some outlook beyond the ends of the building, Nos 7-13 would feel particularly enclosed. The building would appear overbearing and would be visually dominant both from the gardens and ground floor rooms of these houses and, to a lesser extent, from the rear facing bedrooms. This would adversely affect the living conditions of the occupants, making their homes and gardens less pleasant places to be.
7. This would be the case irrespective of the presence of trees and other vegetation which provides some screening between the gardens and the existing buildings. I acknowledge that the proposal would not result in any material loss of sunlight or cause unacceptable overshadowing of these neighbouring properties. However, this does not diminish the other harm I have identified
8. I therefore conclude that Appeal A would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupants of Nos 5-15 Willow Close arising from loss of outlook and the introduction of an unacceptable sense of enclosure. The proposal would conflict with Policy B3 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan, which seeks to protect residential amenity.

Appeal B

9. Appeal B is a revised scheme that sought to overcome the Council's concerns in relation to the original proposal. The proposal would still increase the height of the building by 4m, but the vertical extension would be set-in from the western boundary of the site by 5m. The eaves height on the western elevation of the building would remain as it is at present.
10. The impact of the additional bulk of the building on the occupants of the houses in Willow Close would be reduced as a consequence of this change. However, the additional height of the building combined with its considerable width, would introduce a large and long expanse of blank wall and roof which would still dominate the outlook from the rear of the affected gardens.

11. The increased separation distance between the enlarged factory and the neighbouring dwellings would not be sufficient to overcome the harm arising from the scale and proportions of the extension. The significant increase in the height and bulk of the building would result in these homes and gardens feeling much more enclosed than they are at present.
12. I therefore conclude that Appeal B would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupants of Nos 5-15 Willow Close arising from loss of outlook and the introduction of a significant sense of enclosure. The proposal would conflict with Policy B3 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan, which seeks to protect residential amenity.

Other Matters

13. The proposal would provide benefits to the company, allowing for more efficient operations of the business. However, other than improving efficiency and providing additional storage space there was no evidence to suggest that the proposal would provide additional jobs or support the company's growth. The National Planning Policy Framework strongly supports sustainable economic growth and benefits to the economy are matters that weigh in favour of the proposal. However, on the basis of the evidence before me the benefits to the business would not outweigh the harm to the living conditions of the occupants of the adjacent dwellings.

Conclusions

14. For this reason, and having regard to all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR