



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2017

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/W/17/3170344

21a The Crescent, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8RB

- 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 & Mrs P Fassam against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/16/4437, dated 18 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 1 no. 3 bed dwelling, with associated parking, cycle and refuse storage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Keymer Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The proposal is for a two storey three bedroom detached house to one side of No 21a, a recently built Victorian style semi-detached house on the northern side of The Crescent within the Keymer CA. The site, slightly wedge shaped, currently forms part of the wide frontage and side garden of No 21a, one of four semi-detached properties in two pairs. On the other side lies No 15, a two storey detached house set back and angled towards the site, and on the opposite side of the road a large villa set behind trees.
4. The residential area in the vicinity of the appeal site is characterised by well-spaced houses with wide gaps between buildings allowing views between them. The semi-detached houses to the west are widely spaced, and the two new pairs of semi-detached houses, Nos 21a – 21d, have wide spaces at each end and between the pairs. In contrast to this established character, the proposed house would appear cramped in its plot, with a narrower gap between the new house and No 21a and only a passage about 1 m wide between the house and the side boundary with No 15. Most of the existing view over the side garden to the trees beyond would be lost. In addition, the roof form of the proposed house would be gable end onto the road, increasing its visual impact compared to the semi-detached properties nearby which have pitched roofs facing the road and their ridgelines parallel to it.

5. The proposal would also involve the loss of frontage hedging and five existing trees which together contribute to the verdant character of the area. Many of these trees appear to have been required to soften the impact of the scheme to construct Nos 21a-21d. The loss of these trees, particularly the Laburnum in the middle of the front garden, would significantly erode the semi-rural character of the area, albeit the latter is a relatively poor specimen. There is insufficient space in front of the new house for replacement planting to compensate. Car parking in front of the property, instead of to the side as in the case of Nos 21a-21d, would also be a discordant feature of the proposal.
6. For these reasons the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the Keymer CA contrary to Policies B1, B7 and B12 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004. These require new housing to demonstrate a sensitive approach by respecting the character and form of the locality in which they take place, resist the loss of trees which are of significant public amenity value and seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The latter policy also reflects the statutory requirement in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Other matters

7. The proposed materials and many design details would match and reflect the Victorian character of many nearby properties. However, these attributes would not mitigate the harm that would result to the character and appearance of the area as a result of the new dwelling in this location.
8. The Council accept that they cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The proposal would provide a much needed dwelling in a sustainable location which would offer good quality accommodation and make a small but useful contribution to housing land requirements. It would also provide important social and economic benefits for the area which would be a significant advantage of the scheme. However, as explained above, it would conflict with Policies B1, B7 and B12 of the Local Plan and because of these failings would not satisfy the environmental dimension of sustainable development. The adverse impacts of the proposal would therefore significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in this case.
9. In terms of the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework the harm to the Keymer CA would be less than substantial. However, the public benefits of the proposal outlined in the previous paragraph do not outweigh the harm that would result.

Conclusion

10. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR