
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July, 2017

by S. J. Buckingham, BA (Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI FSA

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

Decision date: 16th August, 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B1415/W/17/3173482

1a Hoads Wood Road, Hastings, TN34 2BJ

- 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 Terry Fontenelle against the decision of Hastings Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: HS/FA/16/00937 dated 25 November, 2016 was refused by notice dated 3 February, 2017.
 - The development proposed is a detached dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, and whether it would provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers in terms of external amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. No 1a Hoads Wood Road is a modest bungalow on the corner of Hoads Wood Road and Elphinstone Road. It is set to the back of its plot with garden to the front and one side, and a double garage to the other. The garden contains a number of trees, which the parties do not dispute are individually of low value. At the time of my site visit a number had already been cut down and the formerly high hedge reduced significantly in height.
 4. While the dwellings immediately adjacent to the appeal site are other bungalows, the surrounding area contains a mixture of bungalows and two storey houses. Dwellings are generally closely spaced along the road frontage but gain a more spacious setting from gardens to front and rear. The rear gardens tend to be relatively generous in size, acting as a counterpoint to the built form of the area. The resulting open and green nature of the area is emphasised by glimpses between buildings of these gardens and their often mature landscaping. The appellant has pointed out some anomalies, but I do not consider that they are sufficiently numerous to undermine this overall character.
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5. The appeal proposal is for a two storey, chalet style dwellinghouse set to the side of the existing house, in space currently partly occupied by the garage. A new plot would be created which would be something less than half of the existing, indented at the rear to take account of a small projection of No 1a. The new dwelling would be set back to around the middle of this plot, with space at the front for a drive and landscaping, and a small garden area to the rear. To the front it would sit just forward of the building line of No 1a.
6. The proposed dwelling would fill nearly the entire width of its plot, which, combined with the small size of that plot, and small space to the rear, would create a development which would appear cramped in the context of the more spacious character of the area. As dwellings in the area vary in size and height, I consider that it would not be uncharacteristic in being of two storeys. However, its relatively wide frontage, and additional height and bulk at roof level would appear overly dominant in relation to the bungalows in its immediate vicinity, and, in combination with its constrained plot, exacerbate the cramped and over-developed appearance. It would thereby cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The appellant has stated that there is an absence of any significant vegetation within the street scene. The appeal site itself is no longer well screened by its mature hedgerow, but notwithstanding this front gardens on the north side of Hoads Wood Road are generally well planted, while mature pine trees line it on the south, combining to reinforce the green character of the area, which the proposed intensification of built form at this point would harm.
8. The development would therefore conflict with policy DM1 of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015 (the LP) which requires that development proposals protect and enhance local character.
9. *Outdoor amenity space*
10. The proposed dwelling is of two bedrooms, and might be expected to be used as a family dwelling. Policy DM3 of the LP, which seeks to achieve a good living standard for future users of proposed development, seeks appropriate levels of private external space, especially for homes of two or more bedrooms designed for family use, and to achieve this expects a private, normally rear, garden with a depth of at least 10m.
11. The proposed rear garden would fall significantly short of this requirement in respect of depth, and would occupy less than the full width of the dwelling. It would therefore be both unacceptably shallow and small overall, and, notwithstanding its rectangular shape, unlikely to be able satisfactorily to accommodate the range of activities that might be expected to take place in a family garden. It would therefore fail to provide a good living standard for future occupiers of the property, contrary to policy DM3 of the LP.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above therefore, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Buckingham

INSPECTOR