
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 August 2017

by N A Holdsworth MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 25/08/17

Appeal Ref: APP/M3835/D/17/3175528

58 Pelham Road, West Tarring, Worthing, BN13 1JB

- 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 and Mrs Darrell and Laura Hopkins against the decision of Worthing Borough Council.
 - The application Ref AWDM/1693/16 dated 2 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension and loft conversion with rear facing feature dormer.
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal building is located at the end of a terrace of four dwellings, at the junction of Pelham Road and Bellview Road. Due to the orientation of Bellview Road it occupies an irregular shaped corner plot, with an area of garden to the side of the house which then narrows to the rear of the appeal building. Because of the layout of the appeal site, the amount of space between the building and adjacent roads is consistent with other buildings facing the junction. This is particularly apparent in views from the south, where the appeal building appears to follow the same building line as the west side of Bellview Road.
4. The two storey side and roof extension would be built in the space between the existing building and Bellview road, bringing the side elevation of the enlarged building close to the site boundary. The extended building would therefore appear significantly more prominent in views from the road than other buildings around this junction. In views from the south, the extended building would appear to protrude forward of the existing building line and, due to its proximity to the road, would diminish the open setting of Bellview Road in relation to the junction. In consequence, the side extension would be a dominant feature that would appear out of place in relation to the surrounding street-scene.

5. In coming to this view I acknowledge that the building is currently surrounded by a fence and hedging that runs along its boundary to Bellview Road. However, this simply denotes the domestic curtilage of the appeal site, and has very limited effect on how the building relates to the roads that surround it. I also note that there is an existing garage building to the rear of the appeal property, built forward of the existing building line along Bellview Road. However its recessed position and single storey height limit the effect it has on the established pattern of spacing between buildings and the surrounding roads. Both parties also refer to a historic permission for a single storey extension in a similar location to the appeal proposal. I am content on the basis of the evidence before me that the harm that would arise from the proposed development is greater than either the existing garage or the previous approval, principally due to its additional height, bulk and scale.
6. The Council's reason for refusal also relates to the detailed design of the extension, including concern about that the detailing of the proposed brickwork including arched window heads that would not be replicated in the extended building. However, I observed that there is substantial variation in the appearance of buildings in the area surrounding the appeal site, which have been adapted over time in different ways. As such, I am not persuaded that the differences in materials, including the proposed use of hang tiles, and the failure to replicate exactly the fenestration detail of the existing building would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
7. I also accept that the proposed porch is larger than others found in the surrounding area. However, the materials used in its construction and its detailed design would otherwise reflect the appearance of the existing building. Whilst it would add additional bulk to the front elevation of the building, this would not in my opinion result in a scale of development that harms the character and appearance of the area.
8. It is unclear on the basis of the officers report whether the Council's reason for refusal also relates to the proposed dormer window on the rear elevation. In any case, it has not been demonstrated that this part of the development would harm the character and appearance of the building or the area that surrounds it. I have noted that there are differences between the dormer as shown in plan and elevation form. However, I find that the dormer window as shown on the rear elevation drawing would be proportionate to the appearance and form of the existing roof, and would otherwise be acceptable in terms of its relationship with the surrounding area.
9. The appellant contends that due to its detailed design, the side extension would be subservient to the host building and follows the design principles set out in the Council's supplementary planning guidance: '*Extending or Altering Your Home*' (1998) ('SPG'). However, this guidance also states that developments must be acceptable in relation to the character and appearance of the street on which they are located. For the reasons explained in this decision, I find that due to its bulk, location and scale the side extension would fail to achieve a satisfactory relationship with the street-scene.
10. In conclusion, I find that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its effect on the character and appearance of the area with the exception of the two storey side and roof extension. For the reasons set out above, because of its location, bulk and mass, this aspect of the development would be a

dominant feature that would appear out of place in relation to the surrounding street-scene. This would conflict with Policy 16 of the Council's Core Strategy April 2011, saved policy H16 of the Worthing Local Plan 2003, the Council's SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' which, amongst other things, requires proposed extensions to have an acceptable relationship with the character and appearance of the surrounding street-scene.

11. Paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and confirms good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. Framework paragraph 64 states "...Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions....". For the reasons set out above, the appeal scheme would be an example of poor design that would fail to meet the aims and objectives of the relevant parts of the Framework, including those within Section 7 – Requiring good design.

Other issues

12. The absence of any objections to the proposal does not constitute a benefit in its favour.
13. I appreciate that part of the extended building would provide an annexe for the purpose of providing living accommodation for an elderly relative. However, it has not been demonstrated that there are no alternative ways of meeting this housing need, and therefore I can only attach very limited weight to this argument in favour of the development.
14. In broader terms, I accept that the proposal would provide improved living accommodation in a sustainable location and with the benefit of a reasonably sized residual garden area. I also note the appellant's intention to source sustainable building materials, and to incorporate energy and water saving measures in to the build. However, the matters weighing in favour of the scheme, including the scope of possible planning conditions do not outweigh the harm and policy conflict I have identified in relation to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR