



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2019

by A Thompson BSc BTP MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/19/3226435

27 Lucastes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1JN

- 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 David Hodkinson against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/19/0291, dated 20 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is two storey extensions to side and front and single storey extension to side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for two storey extensions to side and front and single storey extension to side at 27 Lucastes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1JN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DM/19/0291, dated 20 January 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) No external materials shall be used other than those specified on the application form without the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed plans and elevations reference B.023.18.02 Rev A and Block Plan (Site Plan showing Proposed Extension).

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of 27 Lucastes Road (the host building), and the Lucastes Conservation Area (the conservation area).

Reasons

3. All the properties surrounding the host building lie within the conservation area, which is predominantly residential in nature, with the majority of buildings dating from the 1950's and 1960's. The appellant's evidence lists the features that have been identified as contributing to the special character, and thus the significance, of the conservation area. These features include: the

variety of buildings which represent a range of age types and architectural styles; and the spacious nature of development, which is characterised by buildings set back from the road frontage, with wide grass verges along Lucastes Avenue and Lucastes Road. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

4. The host property is a, mid-20th century, unlisted, detached property located on a corner plot at the junction of Lucastes Road and Lucas Way. It makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. A large double garage building, with gable roof, has recently been constructed at the front of the plot, adjacent to the junction. There is extensive boundary landscaping along both sides of the plot that front the public roads, although this has yet to fully mature.
5. On my site visit, I noted that 29 Lucastes Road, which is sited on higher ground than the host building on the other side of Lucas Way, has a substantial single storey block, which includes twin gables, in front of the main building. This block is clearly visible from both Lucastes Road and Lucas Way.
6. The proposed development would involve the erection of a two storey forward extension of the host building. The forward extension would have both new and modified gable roofs, with the new gable being the more prominent of the two.
7. The extended building would be well set back from both adjoining roads. From most public vantage points along Lucastes Road and Lucas Way, the proposed front extensions would be largely hidden behind the existing garage and/or the boundary landscaping, which would not be affected by the development. It is likely that when the boundary landscaping has fully matured very little of the proposed front extension would be visible from either of the adjoining roads.
8. On my site visit I also observed the diversity of architectural styles that have been identified as an important feature of the conservation area. A number of dwellings in the conservation area, in addition to the host property, have gable roofs, and some of these have more than one gable on the front elevation. Many of the properties appear to have been extended, with a number of those extensions involving the provision of substantial additions at the front of the main building, typically garage blocks.
9. In this context, and having regard to the prominent twin gables next door (albeit on a smaller scale), I do not consider that the provision of a second gable on the host property would appear out of place or harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
10. Although the two gables would overlap to a limited degree, because of the difference in their forward projection, I do not consider that the effect would be visually harmful to the host building or the surrounding area. Similarly the front extensions would not be out of scale with the host building, which following earlier extensions, is quite substantial.
11. I note the Council's concerns regarding the proposed dormer. The use of standing seam metal sheeting and rooflights, in a box like structure does not reflect the dormers nearby nor fully accord with the Council's Dormer Window and Rooflight Design Guidance (DWRDG).

12. However, the dormer would be located on the side elevation of the host building that faces the flank wall/roof of 25 Lucastes Road. No.25 sits slightly forward of the existing building line of the host property. The dormer would be largely at first floor level, not main roof level, and set back from the front of the extended building. In combination these factors mean that little of the dormer would be visible from the street view.
13. The dormer would also be set back from the edge of the roof nearest Lucastes Road and well below the ridge line. Thus it would accord with an important requirement of the DWRDG for dormers to be visually subordinate to the roofslope. Given these factors, and although there would be a degree of conflict with the DWRDG, I do not consider that the dormer would materially harm the character or appearance of the host building, the street scene or the conservation area.
14. I do not consider that the small flat roofed extension on the south side of the building would be either incongruous or obtrusive. As the appellant notes in his evidence the Council has accepted the provision of a large single storey extension on a prominent corner site elsewhere within the conservation area. Given its height in relation to the existing boundary landscaping, the extension would not be visible from surrounding public vantage points. The provision of a small flat roof would match the design of the flat roof of the projecting bay proposed at the front of the building and therefore I do not consider it would be appropriate to impose a condition to require the provision of a lean to roof.
15. In conclusion on this issue, I find that the proposed development would not harm either the character or appearance of the host building, the surrounding area or the conservation area. Accordingly, the development would accord with policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (2018) and policies E9 and H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (2016). These policies require new development to be well designed, reflect the characteristics of the surrounding area and conserve or enhance the historic environment.
16. As the development would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area it would accord with paragraphs 193-197 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Furthermore, I do not consider that there is substantive conflict with the DWRDG sufficient to justify refusal of permission on that ground alone.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be allowed. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed conditions to ensure the materials used safeguard the visual amenity of the area and to provide certainty about what has been approved.

Anthony Thompson

INSPECTOR