
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 January 2020

by Neil Smith BA Hons BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/19/3240260

Little Smeads, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe RH17 6NG

- 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 Bensley and Ms Flexman against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/19/2850, dated 15 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is to remove the existing single storey extension and construct a new rear extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the removal of the existing single storey extension and construction of a new two-storey rear extension at Little Smeads, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe RH17 6NG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DM/19/2850, dated 15 July 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1)The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2)The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan; Block Plan; and Proposed and Existing Plan incl Site, Ref mm/01/LittleSmeads.
 - 3) No development shall commence until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved samples.
 - 4) No development shall take place until details of the design of windows and external doors including plans/elevations/drawings at scale 1:20 have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Procedural Matter

2. For the purposes of clarity and accuracy, I have amended the original description of development as set out in the banner to this decision to more accurately reflect the appeal proposal. The description of development I have used is similar to that taken from the Council's decision notice. It does not change the development for which planning is sought.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the appeal proposal on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area (CA); and
 - ii) the setting of the listed building, Symmonds Cottages.

Reasons

Character and Appearance of the Balcombe CA

4. The appeal site accommodates a two-storey, brick built detached dwelling. It is at the rear of the plot, with a large garden area to the front and a smaller garden area to the side and rear and it is bounded by a tall timber fence. There is a gravelled parking area and single-storey double garage which fronts onto the street. The dwelling has been extended by virtue of a two-storey extension with a flat roof which wraps around the rear corner of the building and there is also a one and a half-storey pitched roof extension to the rear.
5. To the rear of the appeal property are Symmonds Cottages, a Grade II listed timber-framed building. It forms two dwellings and has been refaced with red brick on the ground floor and weather-boarding above. The dwellings are set towards the rear part of the plot and have generous garden areas which wrap around the building. There is also a single storey timber garage which is between No.2 Symmonds Cottages and the appeal property.
6. The appeal site is within the Balcombe CA, a designated heritage asset. The CA comprises many attractive buildings that date from the 16th century through to the Victorian period. There are a number of large detached houses, set predominantly in spacious gardens with extensive grass verges bordering wide roads. The appeal property displays these characteristics and makes a positive contribution to the CA.
7. The appeal proposal is for the demolition of the existing single-storey rear extension and the construction of a two-storey rear extension with a rear porch. The rear wall of the extension would be in line with the existing two-storey extension and would be set in from the main side wall of the original pitched roof. The chimneys and the original roof of the house would still be visible when viewed from the side and rear. The extension would have a pitched roof behind a brick parapet and would appear as an appropriate and subservient addition to the house.
8. The existing windows would be replaced with Georgian pattern sashes with timber frames and brick headers and there would be a small porch incorporated into the design. The numerous and rather cluttered drain pipes would be replaced with less prominent drain pipes. Overall the appearance of the rear elevation would have a sense of uniformity consistent with the main dwelling.
9. Concluding on this main issue, the appeal proposal would be an appropriate, subservient addition to the site and would be consistent with the preservation of the Balcombe CA. It would comply with Policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Council District Plan (DP) (2014-2031) (March 2018) and Policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan (NP) (2016-2031) (September 2016)

which require, amongst other things, development in a conservation area to conserve or enhance its special character or appearance.

Character and appearance – setting of the listed building

10. The listed building, Symmonds Cottages, has large front garden areas and is separated from the appeal dwelling by a tall wooden fence. The setting of a heritage asset is not a fixed concept; it is concerned with the way the heritage asset is experienced. The listed cottages are visible from the surrounding area and from the adjoining properties as they are set within generous and open garden areas.
11. The appeal proposal would be a subservient addition to the main dwelling. It would be no closer to the cottages than the existing dwelling and the sufficient distance between them would allow views of the cottages to be maintained.
12. Consequently, the appeal proposal would cause no harm to the setting of the listed building, Symmonds Cottages. The proposal complies with Policies DP26 and DP34 of the DP and Policy 3 of the NP which require, amongst other things, development to protect listed buildings and their settings.

Conditions

13. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans in the interest of certainty and it is not necessary to list the existing floor plans. Conditions concerning external materials are required in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

14. The appeal proposal is a modest and sensitively designed two-storey rear extension that would be subservient to the original dwelling. It would preserve the character of the Balcombe CA and would preserve the setting of the nearby listed building.
15. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted.

Neil Smith

INSPECTOR