
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 July 2020

by S J Papworth DipArch(Glos) RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/U1430/D/20/3254638

The Sutton Point, The Suttons, Camber, Rye TN31 7RS

- 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 Colin Smith against the decision of Rother District Council.
 - The application Ref RR/2019/1390/P, dated 5 June 2019, was refused by the Council by notice dated 9 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is two storey extension including new roof and internal re-modelling and three-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. I allow the appeal and grant planning permission for two storey extension including new roof and internal re-modelling and three-storey side extension at The Sutton Point, The Suttons, Camber, Rye TN31 7RS in accordance with the terms of the application Reference RR/2019/1390/P, dated 5 June 2019, and subject to conditions 1) to 6) of the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. These are;
 - The effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Lydd Road and The Suttons area of Camber.
 - The effect of the proposals on the living conditions of the occupiers of the dwelling with particular regard to outdoor amenity space.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Policy OSS4 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy sets out general development considerations and requires at iii) that development respects and does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality. A high design quality is sought in Policy EN3 with development required to contribute positively to the character of the site and surroundings including taking opportunities to improve areas of poor visual character or with poor townscape qualities, and robust design solutions are to be tested against, among other criteria, e) the landscape setting of buildings and settlements.
4. The Rother Development and Site Allocations Local Plan contains Policy DHG9 which is specific to extensions and alterations and criteria ii), iii) and vi) refer to respecting and responding positively to the features of the dwelling, not detracting from the character and appearance of the wider street-scene, and

extensions are to be visually subservient to the building including its roof form. The natural and built landscape character of the area is to be maintained under Policy DEN1.

5. Paragraph 124 of the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities, while paragraphs 127 and 130 set out further design requirements including that poor design should be refused permission.
6. The proposal is an extension but is so thoroughgoing in terms of the use of new cladding materials and additional elements as to appear more as a replacement dwelling. It is based on the same part of the tapering site as the present house, with a full width extension to the rear and significant changes to the roof-scape.
7. The Council's first Reason for Refusal refers to the site as the gateway to the village, and that analysis is correct. Approaching along the road from the east there is limited built form; a car park to the left behind the sea wall, and to the right, at a lower level is a caravan and camping field. The design of the amenity buildings associated with that use is however conspicuous.
8. The present house on the appeal site is a significant, and again conspicuous feature, but it is not attractive and only serves to introduce a varied but unprepossessing streetscape of chalets and other buildings along the main road. Diversion along The Suttons however reveals a more attractive variety backing onto the sands, including the beach house referred to in the appellant's Statement and by the same local architects; winner of 'small house of the year' in the 2019 British Homes Awards.
9. The site is within the development boundary defined in the recently adopted Local Plan and the planning history refers to various previously approved schemes for redevelopment and extension on the site, although it is less clear which were carried out. The extent of the present house and its limited contribution to the character and appearance of the area, particularly given the importance of the site's location as a gateway, was clear to see at the site inspection, as was the somewhat dilapidated condition. The dominance of the garage and its poor-quality roofing materials detracts significantly from the approaches to the village and from views along the sea wall and The Suttons.
10. The proposed remodelling would remove the garage and would replace the unattractive brick, weatherboard and concrete tile finish with new timber cladding, render and zinc panelling, the latter extending over parts of the newly formed roof profiles. That change together with the altered and enlarged massing of the elements would significantly improve the presentation of the building. Whilst the elevation drawings show the extent of additional height and massing, the effect over the open approach to the site and village would be of an acceptable addition and the computer-generated image at 00919-PL-360 indicates acceptable change that would enhance the character and appearance of the area.
11. Connected with this effect, the third reason for refusal alleged harm through the raising of the boundary wall along Lydd Road. The appellant makes clear that the extent of change is more limited than indicated on the computer-generated image and relates more directly to the building as a backdrop, the

raising being sought in order to protect the occupiers from traffic noise and fumes. A landscaping condition could require more detail on this item along with proposals for the front of this prominent site, which would lead to an improvement over the present arrangement.

12. In addition to the award-winning dwelling on The Suttons, the appellant has drawn attention to other more contemporary interventions within the various traditional pitched roofed dwellings in the village, and these were identified at the unaccompanied site visit. Whilst in the main either less conspicuous or comprising a larger more unified development, such as at the corner of Lydd Road and Old Lydd Road, these do indicate the value of good quality architecture.
13. To conclude, the present building does not contribute to the character and appearance of the area and its condition is detrimental, although that could be improved. The proposed remodelling would introduce a fitting entry to the village, albeit not matching nearby building styles, and would represent a high quality of design as sought in the Framework and Policy EN3. Whilst the thoroughgoing nature of the extension does not suit testing against parts of Policy DHG9, the effect would not be harmful, and the proposal would satisfy the aims of that policy and Policy DEN1 in its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Living Conditions

14. Policy OSS4 i) requires development to meet the needs of future occupiers including providing appropriate amenities, and Policies DHG7 i) and DHG9 iv) require regard to be had to private amenity space of 10m length normally being required, and extensions leaving sufficient private space for the occupiers.
15. Possibly as a result of previous additions, but more clearly resulting from the shape of the site and the proximity of Lydd Road and The Suttons, the obvious amenity area to the rear of the building seen at the site inspection is small and badly overlooked from the higher viewpoint of The Suttons. To the front, the large double garage takes up useful space, and that remaining is close to the main road with only a low wall between. However, there is ready access to the expanse of the sands without the need to cross a main road.
16. The proposed extension across the rear of the dwelling, replacing a one-third width addition, would remove the limited space presently available, but the removal of the garage would free-up space to the sunnier front area, and as stated previously, a landscaping scheme as offered by the appellant as a condition would ensure an improvement to this area in any event. The addition of the balcony off the living room would provide additional good-quality space that is not available at present and its siting would limit the adverse effects of being on a main road.
17. With improvements secured by condition, the remodelled house would provide an appropriate level of amenity as sought in Policy OSS4 i) and having due regard to the nearby sands, the proposal would not be contrary to Policies DHG7 i) and DHG9 iv); the 10m dimension 'normally' sought is not prescriptive.

Conditions

18. The Council has completed the Householder Questionnaire to accept the standard time condition and that listing the drawings, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning, and these are required. It would not however be appropriate to seek materials that match those of such poor quality as are in place on the existing building, and neither are they proposed. It would be appropriate to seek samples of materials in view of the prominence of the site.
19. As set out previously, a landscaping scheme should be sought for approval in order to ensure the quality of the development and to control its effect on the character and appearance of the area and the provision of amenity space. For the same reason, it is proposed to require the demolition of the garage, as it sits on a footprint that could allow retention, and this Decision is based in part on the benefit of it being removed.
20. The appellant draws attention to a discrepancy between the drawings, in that 00919-PL-226_A shows 3 dotted rectangles indicating rooflights on the north facing roof slope, whereas they are not shown on drawing 00919-PL-351_A. This Decision is based on the latter drawing without the rooflights and a condition should make that clear.

Conclusions

21. The amount of amenity space is appropriate to the location and the remodelling brought about as part of the scheme of extension would enhance the approach to the village and accord with Development Plan and national policies previously cited. As stated in the Officer's Report, there would be further benefits through improvements to the flood resilience of the dwelling, which is stated to currently have ground-floor bedroom accommodation. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S J Papworth

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans; 00919-PL-50_A, 225, 226_A, 227_A, 350_A, 351_A, 360 and 361.
- 3) No work shall be carried out to install new external finishes until samples and specification of those finishes have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be constructed using only the approved external finishes.
- 4) The extension hereby approved shall not be constructed above slab level until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment and to include a programme for implementation. Any trees or shrubs removed, dying, being seriously damaged or diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced in the next planting season with trees or shrubs of similar size and species unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any hard landscaping as may be approved which provides amenity space or car parking spaces shall be available for use before first occupation of the extension and shall be retained for those uses thereafter.
- 5) The extension hereby approved shall not be constructed above slab level until the existing garage has been demolished and permanently removed from the site.
- 6) Notwithstanding the details shown on drawing 00919-PL-226_A, no rooflights are to be installed on the north facing roof-slope, whether or not permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.