



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 August 2020

by S M Holden BSc(Hons) MSc CEng MICE CTPP FCIHT MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/20/3248582

Foxy, Church Road, Flowers Green, Herstmonceux BN27 1RG

- 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 & Mrs M Watterson against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref WD/2019/2632/F, dated 11 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is a rear extension and loft conversion with new dormers and rooflights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the extension on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Foxy is a detached bungalow within a small group of properties on Church Road outside the settlement boundary of Herstmonceux. It is set well back from the street, enclosed by mature vegetation and is not prominent in the street scene.
4. At the front its hipped roof is of modest proportions and is dominated by a tall chimney. The position of the chimney would be amended to allow insertion of a dormer window in the front roof slope which would sit immediately below the apex of the roof. Neither the width nor the depth of the proposed dormer would dominate this element of the roof, the majority of which would be retained. Although not identical in style or fully hipped, it would be of similar proportions to the existing front facing dormer in one of the nearby properties, April Cottage. In this context, I am satisfied that the proposed dormer could be assimilated into the front of the bungalow without causing unacceptable harm to the street scene.
5. The rear of the bungalow comprises two linked hipped roofs in an asymmetric arrangement. While this gives the property a compact appearance, it is not a feature of special architectural merit. However, the proposed rear extension would replace both hipped roofs by extending the main ridge and introducing a two-storey gable end. This would be sub-divided with what appears to be mock Tudor detailing and full height windows on both floors. Consequently, the proposal would result in almost the total loss of the form and scale of this hipped roof and the addition of façade that would bear little relationship to any of the features of the existing house. Furthermore, side facing dormers would be inserted in the enlarged roof slopes which would be of similar proportions to the one proposed within the

- front roof slope. However, their height and roof form would add significantly to the overall width of the building when viewed from the rear.
6. The proposal would also result in multiple eaves heights with those of the rear extension being considerably higher than the existing ones. Even though Foxy does not have a uniform eaves height throughout, the proposal would add to this complexity, thereby failing to create a sense of cohesion between the existing dwelling and the extension. In short, the combination of the rear extension and its large and bulky dormer windows would simply overwhelm the form, proportions and features of the existing dwelling.
 7. The Wealden Design Guide, 2008, (WDG) advises that extensions should normally be subordinate and not dominate the building itself, its neighbours or its setting. Most of the proposal would be visually contained within its generously proportioned plot. Neither would it be unacceptably close to its neighbours or unduly prominent from the street. In these respects, it would be acceptable within its wider setting. However, the size, form and bulk of the rear extension effectively amounts to a 2-storey extension on a single storey dwelling. This, combined with its side dormers, would be out of scale with the host property to the detriment of its original character and appearance.
 8. I am aware that nearby properties have dormer windows and gable features. There is therefore no objection in principle to the addition of similar elements within an extension of Foxy. However, the details of any proposal need to respect the proportions and individual features of this particular property, which I was not persuaded they did in this case. As no details of what could be proposed under the General Permitted Development Order were presented, there is no certainty that any scheme would be implemented as an alternative to the appeal proposal. This matter therefore carries little weight in my assessment. The suggestions provided by the Council may differ from those for which permission was sought. However, they appear to be consistent with the advice of the WDG and could assist the appellant with the development of an alternative proposal.
 9. Consequently, even in the absence of harm to the surrounding area, I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property. It therefore fails to comply with saved Policies EN27 and HG10 of the Wealden Local Plan (1998), Policies WCS14 and SPO13 of the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (2013), and the guidance set out in the WDG. These policies and the associated guidance seek to promote high quality design that is appropriate and sympathetic to the distinctive features and characteristics of existing development. Similarly, I find that the scheme conflicts with the objective of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) to promote good design that will be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

10. Adjoining occupants raised concerns about privacy and light and the Parish Council's support was subject to measures to ensure that the neighbour's privacy was protected. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, these were not determining factors in my assessment of the scheme.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR