
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2020

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/20/3248953

1 Wedmans Place, Wedmans Lane, Rotherwick, Hook, RG27 9BS

- 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 Cottis against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02517/HOU, dated 6 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey side extension and insertion of window at first floor rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the date of the decision the Council has adopted the *Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032* (HLPSS). In May 2020 the Council published the *Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 Saved Policies* (LP Saved Policies). The decision notice includes reference to *Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006* policies GEN4 and RUR24. Neither of these policies are included within the LP Saved Policies and I take it therefore that they no longer form part of the development plan for Hart.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing building and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling. It is part of a group of six (Nos 1-6 Wedmans Place) similar styled dwellings that are uniquely arranged and accessed on foot from an informally laid parking area to the front and located at the terminal end of a short limb leading from Lampards Close. In common with its attached neighbour at No 2, the appeal property has a very deep fronting garden and shallow rear garden. There is a public footpath that runs along the side boundary of the appeal site.

5. Nos 1 and 2 Wedmans Place are both visually prominent, being positioned directly in front of the parking area and vehicular approach from Lampards Close. Although there are design variations between the semi-detached pairs, there is a pleasing symmetry and simplicity to the traditional architecture of this group, despite the more discreet positions of Nos 3-6, and the side and rear extensions to No 4, which are unseen from the public domain of the parking area.
6. I recognise the attempt to create an impression of subservience for the side extension. However, it would be only marginally recessed behind the existing front elevation and with only a slightly lower ridge. Consequently, I am not persuaded that it would appear sufficiently subordinate in order to properly respect the scale and appearance of the original building. The use of matching materials and fenestration would not mask the modest proportions of the cottage being dominated by the size of the proposed extension, and any appreciated simplicity to its form would be lost. The unsympathetic scale of the proposal would be accentuated by its visual prominence, including when seen from the nearby side footpath, where the mass and proximity of the new building would be likely to appear overbearing and out of keeping with the somewhat verdant and spacious feel to the immediate environs.
7. I have noted the appellant's assertion that any side extension would be likely to unbalance the appearance of this semi-detached pair. However, greater subservience would have the potential to mitigate any visual harm by enabling the original form of the building to stand proud and appear visually dominant. This would not be achieved. Accordingly, contrary to the appellant's view I find that the proposal would negatively interrupt the established pattern of development in the area. It would neither reflect nor positively contribute to the qualities of its surroundings and in this regard there would be conflict with the broad design principles of LP Saved Policies Policy GEN1, part (i) of which requires development to be in keeping with local character by virtue of, amongst other things, scale, massing, prominence, and siting. For this same reason there would also be conflict with criterion a) of HLPSS Policy NBE9 – *Design*, which has been brought to my attention by the appellant, and Policy BE01 - *Design* of the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032.

Other Matters

8. I have considered the other concerns that have been expressed by some nearby residents but there is no substantive evidence before me to suggest that the proposal would impact upon any protected species, or upon the levels of parking provision locally. The proposal is for an extension to an existing dwelling and not for an additional, self-contained unit of accommodation.
9. My attention has been drawn to other properties in the locality that have been extended, and to some infill development. However, none of these other examples compare directly with the appeal proposal, which I have considered based upon the merits of the individual case, including having regard to the specific context of the appeal site.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building and the wider area.

Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR