



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2020

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc CIH MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B1415/D/20/3259649

8 Old Top Road, Hastings TN35 5DJ

- 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 Miss Benton and Mr Davis against the decision of Hastings Borough Council.
 - The application Ref HS/FA/20/00172, dated 24 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is for loft conversions with new gable end, rear flat roof dormer and front pitched roof dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. In certain circumstances residential dwellings can be subject to permitted development rights. However, the scheme before me is for a full planning permission. Therefore, I have proceeded accordingly.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and the host dwelling and adjoining terrace.

Reasons

4. The appeal dwelling is located in a dense residential area of varied style brick and tile dwellings that includes terraced as well as detached, semi-detached, one and two-storey properties and a community building.
5. No 8 Old Top Road is a two-storey end of terrace property that is adjacent to No 10 Old Top Road which is a single storey chalet type bungalow. The dwellings face onto the highway behind modest setbacks near to the junction with Rye Road (A259). The terrace containing the host dwelling is characterised by a continuous roof scape with matching chimneys and hipped roof ends to either side which contributes to the sense of visual balance along this section of the street-scene.
6. The proposal is to construct a loft conversion with a gable end to the left-hand side of the host dwelling with a pitched roof dormer to the front, and a flat roof dormer to the rear.

7. While the submitted drawings show that the development is possible, the proposed hip to gable roof and pitched roof dormer would fundamentally alter the shape of the roof and substantially increase the upper bulk of the property. This would create a top-heavy appearance to the front of the host dwelling. Indeed, whether the proposal would meet nationally described space standards or not, the prominence and box-like appearance of the extension, in combination with a pitched roof dormer, would be at odds with the remaining roof pane when viewed across and along Old Top Road. Moreover, notwithstanding the porch at No 2 Old Top Road, it would disrupt the symmetry and balance provided by the matching hipped gables and chimneys of the terrace. As such, the proposal would be incongruous with the remainder of the terrace and the host dwelling.
8. Furthermore, while the existing relationship with No 10 is softened by the relatively gentle slope of the hipped roof of No 8, the mass and close proximity of the proposed gable end on the left-hand side of the terrace, with or without hedged landscaping between the two properties, would create a sense of enclosure and erode the visual break between the dwellings when viewed from the road. Consequently, the scale, form and extent of the proposal would loom over the boundary with the dwelling at No 10, and hence appear as a jarring form of development in this specific location. I conclude therefore, that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area.
9. I acknowledge that there are other properties along Old Top Road that have had extensions to the front, side or rear. However, I do not have the details of those developments before me, and moreover, I cannot be certain that they were considered under the same development plan. Therefore, as is correct, I have considered the proposal before me on its own planning merits.
10. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to Policies DM1 of the Hastings Local Plan Development Management Plan 2015, as supported by Policy SC1 of the Hastings Local Plan Planning Strategy 2014, which say amongst other things, that all proposals must reach a good standard of design, which includes efficient use of resources, and takes into account protecting and enhancing local character.
11. For similar reasons, the proposal does not meet the requirements of Paragraph 127 (c) of the *National Planning Policy Framework* which requires that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Other Matters

12. My attention has been drawn to the fact that no objections have been raised by the occupants of No 10 or other interested parties. However, as the occupancy of No 10 and other nearby dwellings is likely to change over time, I can only give this very limited weight.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR