



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 6 July 2021

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/W/21/3270812

The Shed, Orchid Answers, 113 Second Avenue, Almodington, Earnley, West Sussex PO20 7LF

- 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 H Strachan against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application Ref E/20/02993/FUL, dated 17 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is for a replacement dwelling - amendments to design permitted under E/19/02956/FUL - to provide for 2 storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant's appeal submission includes an amended front elevation drawing with a false window detail at first floor level, replacing the previously proposed blank area of tile hanging. The Council has had an opportunity to comment on the change and I accept that this is a relatively minor detail that does not significantly alter the development as a whole. Accordingly, I do not consider there is any prejudice in taking the amended drawing into account in my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a new dwelling, the external construction of which has been largely completed. It is located within the countryside, at the end of a private access road which serves a number of existing dwellings/smallholdings. The dwellings are generally well spaced apart with mature planting separating the buildings and providing screening along the access road. There is a strong rural/agrarian quality to the area.
5. The proposal is for a new dwelling, identical to that currently being completed, but with a two storey front projection. The front elevation of the existing dwelling under construction has two wide gables either side of a central front entrance. The upper floor accommodation within the gables is partly contained within the roof space although a central dormer above the front entrance is more obviously set within the roof. The additional extension to the eastern

gable would retain this overall approach albeit with two additional dormers within the extended roof space.

6. When approaching the proposed dwelling from the site entrance, the appearance would be similar to the existing front elevation, albeit the additional built form and bulk to the building would be noticeable. However, the impact from this viewpoint would be relatively contained. The east elevation would present as a large expanse of mainly blank walling and roof that would be somewhat unattractive. Part of this elevation is likely to be visible from the garden to Mere House although Mere House itself would block views from Second Avenue of the proposal.
7. The additional built form would however be more obvious when viewing the site from the public footpath to the north west. Although the appellant contends that the views from the footpath would be oblique, I was able to easily observe the house from it. From this position, it was possible to appreciate the design and extent of the current building. The building has clearly taken a traditional design approach in certain respects, but its scale and proportions appear more modern, and make the building prominent within the landscape.
8. A further 6 metre, two storey extension to the eastern side of the building would result in an expanded built form that would be clearly visible from the footpath. I therefore disagree with the appellant and find that the proposal would be discernible in the locality and that the resulting building would not be close to identical to the permitted building. Instead, its elongated appearance and increased visual prominence would harm the rural character of the area.
9. Although there is no detailed landscaping scheme before me, given the scale of the works, I am not persuaded that a landscaping buffer would be sufficient to overcome my concerns and assimilate the proposal successfully into the landscape. Accordingly, I do not consider that a condition to secure boundary planting would be appropriate.
10. I therefore find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies 1, 47 and 48 of the Local Plan¹ which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that new development respects the character of its area. The proposal would also lead to conflict with the Framework², in particular paragraph 127, which amongst other things, seeks to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the local character.
11. The Council's reason for refusal also refers to Local Plan Policies 2 and 45. These seem to me to relate more to the broader principle of a new dwelling, which is something the Council has previously accepted on the site. However, this does not alter my overall conclusions on the acceptability of the proposal.

Other Matters

12. The appellant points to the neighbouring property, Mere House, as an example of other buildings in Second Avenue that have been extended and are of comparable scale. Whilst this property has clearly been the subject of extensions, it more obviously presents as a building with first floor accommodation in the roof and thus its overall profile and visibility is very

¹ Chichester Local Plan – Key Policies 2014 - 2019

² National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

different to that of the appeal building. For example, whilst I was able to observe the top of the roof of the neighbouring property from the public footpath to the north west, unlike the appeal building, it very much nestled into the landscape. Based on what I have seen, the neighbouring buildings do not harm the character and appearance of the area in the same way the appeal proposals would. They do not therefore lead me to allowing the appeal.

13. I recognise that the appeal proposal would replicate the height and design approach of the previously approved dwelling and use matching materials. However, these would not overcome the harm I have identified regarding the overall scale of the proposed development.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR