



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 15 July 2021

by J Reid BA(Hons) BArch(Hons) RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/D/21/3277859

Willow House (formerly Yeomans), Mill Lane, Sidlesham PO20 7NA

- 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 J Holden against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application Ref SI/21/00397/DOM, dated 10 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is Erection of first floor, single storey front [south] extension and front porch.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The location plan, block plan and proposed site plan show that the main range of the appeal dwelling is orientated roughly north west to south east, but the elevations are titled otherwise. So, to reflect the orientation of the dwelling more accurately, I shall refer to its elevations titled 'north', 'east', 'south', and 'west' as north east, south east, south west and north west respectively.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect that the proposed development would have on:
 - the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of The Stables and Johnsons Cottage regarding outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The roughly rectangular appeal site is outside any settlement listed in Policy 2 of the Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029 (LP), so it is, in policy terms, in the countryside. The site is roughly south east of a group of dwellings by an unclassified lane off the bend where the stretch of Mill Lane from the B2145 turns towards the mill pond and the quay. To roughly south east, the generally flat mainly open countryside by Pagham Harbour includes irregular-shaped fields that are partly bounded by hedgerows and trees.
5. The single-storey low pitched roofed L-plan appeal dwelling is a former agricultural bungalow that is no longer subject to an occupancy condition. It is edged by its garden and sited close to its common north west boundary with

the dwellings at The Stables and Johnsons Cottage, which are within the Sidlesham Quay Conservation Area.

6. The Conservation Area includes 2 areas of historic development along Mill Lane that are separated by the causeway between the mill pond and the quay. The openness over the harbour and in the surrounding rural landscape is important to its setting. Close by, the dwellings at Johnsons Cottage and The Stables, The Old Poor House, Jubilee Cottage, and Island Cottage contribute positively to the historic character and locally distinctive appearance of the Conservation Area, and to its significance as a historic former maritime and industrial settlement.
7. The compact 2-storey gable-roofed part of Johnsons Cottage is a prominent feature that marks the south east end of the western part of the historic settlement in many views including those across the quay. The much wider appeal dwelling lies some way beyond it to the south east, but its low profile form sustains the important mainly open rural character within the immediate setting of the Conservation Area.
8. The proposal would include a front extension that would make the appeal dwelling deeper, and the proposed upper floor partly within its gabled roof space lit by dormers would greatly increase its scale and bulk. Consequently, the proposal would unacceptably erode the open character of the countryside.
9. The increased scale and bulk of the appeal dwelling would also make it much more prominent. Because of its siting beyond the 2-storey part of Johnsons Cottage, and further from Mill Lane, the proposal would diminish the legibility of the historic development pattern, so this development within its setting would harm the significance of the Conservation Area.
10. Whilst the 'cottage style' extensions are intended to respect the rural context, there would be almost no public benefits, so they would not outweigh the 'less than substantial harm' that the proposal would cause. Moreover, there is insufficient clear and convincing justification to show that the proposal within its setting would be necessary to preserve or enhance the significance of the Conservation Area.
11. Therefore, I consider that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to LP Policies 1 and 45 which seek sustainable development in general and in the countryside, the thrust of LP Policy 33 and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) chapter 12 which seek high quality design, and LP Policy 47 which aims for proposals to conserve and enhance the settings of Conservation Areas.

Living conditions

12. The extended dwelling including its taller gabled front outshoot would be seen over the boundary wall from the south east facing windows at The Stables and from its courtyard, and its tall gable end and nearby dormers would be seen beyond the nearby garden at Johnsons Cottage. However, due to the relationships between the extended dwelling and the neighbouring dwellings and their grounds, the proposal would not be so overbearing or so oppressive that it would unacceptably harm the neighbouring occupiers' living conditions. It would satisfy LP Policy 33 which seeks a high quality living environment.

Other Matter

13. The appellant's Flood Risk Assessment explains that the upper floor of the proposal would provide a safe refuge for the occupiers in the event of flooding. However, as the proposal would not be the only means to achieve that aim, it would not outweigh the harm that the proposal would cause.

Conclusion

14. Whilst the proposal would not harm the neighbouring occupiers' outlook, the harm that it would cause to the character and appearance of the surrounding area is a compelling objection to the scheme. I have found that the proposal would be contrary to the Development Plan when considered as a whole. The other considerations, including the Framework, do not outweigh that conflict.
15. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

J Reid

INSPECTOR