



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2021

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/21/3275275

Lydcombe, Top Road, Sharpthorne, East Grinstead, RH19 4PQ.

- 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 Nigel Callaghan against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/21/0785, dated 25 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as a two storey extension to the front of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The first main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. The second main issue is the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of 37 Marlpit Road (No.37), with particular regard to daylight, sunlight and visual impact.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is located within a spacious and informal residential area which sits on land that slopes up to the south, resulting in panoramic views between the dwellings to the north. Top Road is characterised by a broad mix of dwelling types and designs, including bungalows, chalet style houses with a mixture of hipped and gable roofs, some with dormer windows. In the vicinity of the appeal site the front elevations and roof forms of the dwellings are primarily simple and uncluttered. Elsewhere along Top Road there are two storey front facing gables and small front facing dormer windows.
4. The dwellings on the south side of the road are elevated above the road and those on the north side of the road sit below the road level. The dwellings have a mixture of shallow and deep front gardens, which are enclosed by a combination of hedges, with occasional fences. The trees and hedges around and within the front gardens, together with the generous sized gaps between

many of the gardens contributes to the informal and verdant character and appearance of the area.

5. The appeal dwelling is located on the north side of Top Road and comprises one of a pair of modest sized detached dormer bungalows with simple and uncluttered hipped roofs. They have front facing gable projections, which are both single storey and modest in height. The appeal dwelling is set back from the road behind a generous sized front garden which is enclosed by mature hedging. As a consequence of these factors the appeal dwelling is largely screened from Top Road, other than in the vicinity of the vehicular entrances to the appeal dwelling and the adjacent dormer bungalow.
6. Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (DP) deals with character and Design. Together with section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (Framework), it seeks to ensure that new development is of high-quality design and reflects the distinctive character of the area. New development should contribute positively and clearly define public and private realms and address the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.
7. Principles DG49, DG50 and DG52 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide 2020 (SPD) is consistent with this. Amongst other things it advises that extensions should normally be well integrated with the existing scale, form and massing of the original building to allow it to remain the dominant element of the resultant building. Front extensions will be resisted where they have an adverse impact on the street scene and are more likely to be acceptable where the front building lines are staggered or where the dwelling is set back from the road. Normally front extensions should be limited to a modest single storey extension that reflects the character of the existing property. The SPD explains that front roof additions can have an adverse impact on the character of the dwelling and the street scene if they are out of scale or character with the roofscape and proportions of the host property.
8. The proposed two storey front gable extension would be similar in width to the existing single storey front projection and its form, scale and detailing would also respect that of the existing front projection. However, the proposed extension would be linked to the existing single storey front gable projection by a catslide roof. In addition, there would be a deep dormer roof extension in its eastern roof slope, which would project over the catslide link.
9. Due to their scale, location and detailed design the catslide roof and dormer extension would be out of character and would fail to respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Together with the proposed two storey projection they would dominate the front elevation and the resultant front elevation would appear cluttered, poorly proportioned and contrived. It would fail to respect or respond appropriately to the modest size, form and design of the host dwelling.
10. Whilst views of the resultant dwelling would be limited from the street scene, where it could be seen it would be totally out of character with the uncluttered form of the surrounding dwellings.
11. These concerns are not something that could be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of conditions.

12. I conclude on the first main issue that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. As such it would conflict with DP Policy DP26, Principles DG49, DG50 and DG52 and the Framework.

Living conditions

13. The two storey dwelling at No.37 is set back from the front building line and projects beyond the rear building line of the appeal dwelling. The dwelling at No.37 also sits at a lower level to the appeal dwelling and its rear garden is located alongside the front garden of the appeal property. The two properties are separated from each other by a tall, mature boundary hedge.
14. The proposed two storey front extension would be orientated slightly away from and would project in excess of seven metres beyond the rear of the adjacent conservatory at No.37. However, the roof of the proposed two storey extension would be hipped away from the boundary with No.37 and its ridge height would be approximately six metres. It would be materially lower than the existing dense evergreen boundary hedge.
15. For these reasons I conclude on the second main issue that the proposal would not have a materially harmful impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of No.37, with particular regard to daylight, sunlight and visual impact. Accordingly, in this respect the proposal would comply with LP Policy DP26, SPD Principle DG49 and the Framework. Together and amongst other things they seek to ensure that new development does not result in significant harm to the living conditions of nearby residents.

Conclusion

16. Whilst I have found in favour of the appellant in relation to the second main issue, my conclusion on the first main issue amounts to a compelling reason for refusing this appeal.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR