



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 30 September 2021

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/21/3276601

Myrtle Villa, Chapel Lane, Horsted Keynes RH17 7AF

- 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 David Jenkins against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/21/0292, dated 20 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is two storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Horsted Keynes Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is situated within the Conservation Area and it includes the semidetached Edwardian style appeal dwelling, which has been extended at the side. Together, the historic broadly L-plan appeal dwelling, and the attached handed Smyrna Villa form a T-plan pair. Their long plots, roughly parallel to Chapel Lane, join the lane at the front, with Smyrna Villa side-on to Chapel Lane, and the appeal dwelling roughly side-on to the cricket ground and the car park of The Crown Inn public house to roughly north west.
4. The Conservation Area is mainly characterised by its historic development pattern, the form and layout of its historic and traditional buildings, the spaciousness within The Green and the sense of enclosure due to the building groups and landscaping around it, and its countryside setting. The range of types and styles of buildings, use of traditional and natural building materials, and landscape features including hedgerows and trees, contribute positively to its appearance. The character and the appearance of the Conservation Area are important to its significance as a historic rural settlement.
5. Due to the previous 2 storey pitched roofed side extension, the appeal dwelling takes up most of the width of its plot. Smyrna Villa is the more prominent of the 2 dwellings in views from Chapel Lane, but the front, side and back of the appeal dwelling can be seen from the public right of way over the cricket ground and from the adjoining car park, and its roof can be seen in the gaps between nearby buildings edging The Green. Due to its relatively modest scale, historic character, traditional form and prominent siting, the appeal dwelling

- makes a positive contribution on its own, and as part of the semidetached pair, to the character and the appearance of the Conservation Area.
6. The proposal includes a 2 storey hipped roofed rear extension, with its ridge parallel to that of the main roof, at the back of the main part of the extended dwelling, and to the side of, and nearly as deep as, the 2 storey rear outshoot, with a slightly narrower mainly glazed single storey rear extension roughly half the depth of the former coal store beyond it. It also includes a deeper first floor side facing window and a new side facing ground floor window in the flank wall of the present side extension and a rear facing rooflight.
 7. The main ridge of the proposal would be lower than those of its gabled main roof and gabled paired outshoot. However, due to its height, scale, bulk, form, and siting, including the cluttered appearance of its roofscape and additional fenestration, and in combination with the previous 2 storey side extension, the proposed extension would unacceptably erode the character, form, and scale of the historic L-plan dwelling. As the historic dwelling would no longer be the dominant element of the appeal dwelling, the proposal would be harmfully discordant in views from the cricket ground and the car park. Whilst the back of the dwelling is presently largely screened by planting in nearby gardens when travelling south eastwards in Chapel Lane, and local occupiers did not object, the proposal would also look incongruous in views from the gardens and backs of some nearby dwellings.
 8. A revised plan was submitted during the application process, which shows that the ridge of the proposal's gabled main roof would be parallel to the outshoot roof's ridge. Its gabled form would better reflect the character of the appeal dwelling, but this would be outweighed by its greater bulk, so the revised scheme would not overcome the identified harm. The energy efficiency of the dwelling could be improved without the need for this damaging scheme. Little information about the extensions to nearby dwellings, including Oakfield, 1 and 2 Prospect Cottages and Fern Cottage, has been put to me, although some may predate current policy and practice. So, I must deal with the proposal on its merits, and in accordance with its site specific circumstances, my statutory duty, and relevant local and national policy and guidance.
 9. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. However, there would be almost no public benefits, so they would not be enough to outweigh that harm. Moreover, insufficient clear and convincing justification has been put to me to show that the proposal would be necessary to conserve the Conservation Area in a manner appropriate to its significance as a historic rural settlement.
 10. Therefore, I consider that the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It would be contrary to Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (LP) Policy DP26 which seeks high quality design and respect for context and LP Policy DP35 which reflects the thrust of the statutory duty regarding conservation areas, Policies HK4, HK5 and HK6 of the emerging Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 which reflect those aims, and the Framework which aims for development to be sympathetic to local character and history, and to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Conclusion

11. I have found that the proposed development would be contrary to the Development Plan when taken as a whole. The other considerations in this case, including the Framework, do not outweigh that conflict.
12. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

J Reid

INSPECTOR