

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 December 2021

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th December 2021

1. Appeal Ref: APP/B1415/D/21/3284206

2. 23 Roundwood Road, St Leonards-On-Sea, TN37 7LD

- 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 and Mrs Andy and Amy Adams against the decision of Hastings Borough Council.
 - The application Ref HS/FA/21/00737, dated 31 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two-storey side extension at 23 Roundwood Road, St Leonards-On-Sea, TN37 7LD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref HS/FA/21/00737, dated 31 July 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drg Nos P1001, P1002 Rev B, and P1003 Rev A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on: - (i) the character and appearance of 23 Roundwood Road and the wider street scene, and (ii) the living conditions at 1 and 3 Holmhurst Lane with particular regard to visual impact.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached, chalet style dwelling with a flat roof dormer window to the front and rear roof slopes and which spans the semi-detached pair as part of the dwelling's original design. It is the end property of six similar style dwellings (Nos 23-33 odd) that sit in a row along Roundwood Road and within a wider residential estate comprising a mix of dwelling types. The northern side boundary of the site is common with the rear boundaries of terraced properties at Nos 1-9 (odd) Holmhurst Lane which, due to the topography of the area, sit on noticeably lower levels than the appeal site. The proposal would replace an existing, side attached garage with a two-storey extension that would reflect the form of the existing building but in a slightly subservient manner, with the front elevation recessed and with a lower ridge height. The side addition would extend virtually up to the side boundary of the site, which is on a slight skew.
4. I recognise that this small group of identical semi-detached dwellings has a rhythm and degree of consistency about it, achieved through the symmetry of design and regular spacing between the pairs. However, given that No 23 sits at the end of the row, and has space to the side between the dwelling and the rear elevation of the immediately adjacent Nos 1 and 3 Holmhurst Lane that is far greater than the gaps between each of the pairs, I am not persuaded that the additional width to the building would upset the rhythm of spacing in the street scene. For this same reason I do not consider that the extension would result in the building appearing cramped in its setting.
5. The extension would be recessed and seen as an obvious and subservient side addition, but one that would properly respect the scale, form, and appearance of the original building. The recess would ensure that the original symmetrical form of Nos 23 and 25 would remain dominant and clearly detectable. As such, the established character of this part of Roundwood Road would be adequately preserved. Whilst there would be some obvious change to the appearance of No 23 and the street scene, I am satisfied that the change would not impact in any harmful way. I therefore detect no conflict with the aims and objectives of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) *Householder Development: Sustainable Design* insofar as it seeks to guide the appearance of extensions and alterations to dwellings, or with Policy DM1 of the Hastings Local Plan - Development Management Plan 2015 (DMP) which, amongst other things, requires new development to respect local character and show appreciation for the context of its surroundings. For these same reasons there would be no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) objectives for achieving well-designed places or the aims and objectives of the National Design Guide.

Living Conditions

6. The rear boundaries of the gardens to Nos 1 and 3 Holmhurst Lane are common with the side boundary of the appeal site. Nos 1 and 3 are part of a terrace of five, two-storey dwellings that are orientated at an angle to No 23. No 1 sits forward of the front elevation to No 23 and has a shorter rear garden depth compared with the garden to No 3. The proposed extension would

occupy space in line with, and more or less spanning the full width of, the garden to No 3.

7. Due to the lower ground levels along Holmhurst Lane the rear garden boundaries to Nos 1 and 3 comprise retaining walls with close boarded fencing above. The existing scale and bulk of the appeal property is clearly evident from the enclosed garden spaces and in the outlook from these two properties, but the building is squat, being chalet style. In addition, the arrangement is not wholly atypical in the area but reflective of the development pattern that exists locally where there are numbers of examples of properties backing onto the side elevations of others in reasonably close proximity.
8. Due to the recessed position of No 23 relative to the siting of No 1, the direct outlook from this property and rear garden enclosure would be unaffected. The new extension would be clearly seen at an angle and although the encroachment of built form would be noticeable, it would be seen within the context of the existing building.
9. The effect of the extension would more directly impact the outlook and rear garden of No 3. However, No 23 is on a slight skew so there would not be a direct interface between the opposing elevations. In addition, the garden to No 3 is of a reasonable depth and the additional bulk of the extension, although set closer and up to the shared boundary, would be against the backdrop of the existing dwelling. I am mindful of the levels difference, however, the size and form of the addition would be residential in scale and appearance, and in-keeping with the existing. I accept that there would be some further sense of enclosure to the rear setting of No 3, but I am not persuaded that the change would materially alter the existing arrangement to a degree that would harm the neighbour's existing living conditions. I note also that there was no concern expressed by the neighbour when the planning application was made and determined.
10. Overall, I am satisfied that there would be no harm to the living conditions at Nos 1 and 3 Holmhurst Lane and therefore no conflict with the aims of the SPD as it relates to the impact of residential extensions upon neighbours, or with DMP Policy DM3 which, amongst other things, requires new development to achieve a good living standard for neighbours. For the same reason there would be no conflict with the Framework's policy for achieving well-designed places where it seeks to ensure development achieves a high standard of amenity for existing users of any particular place.

Conditions

11. A condition specifying the relevant plans is necessary as this provides certainty. In the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to ensure the proposal is finished with materials that would match the existing house.
12. The Council has suggested a condition that would limit the hours of external building works. However, given the residential nature and scale of the proposal, and the reasonably short period of construction that would be involved, I do not consider this to be necessary. Moreover, any statutory nuisance would be controlled by other legislation.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given, I conclude that there would be no harm to the character or appearance of 23 Roundwood Road and the wider street scene, or to the living conditions at 1 and 3 Holmhurst Lane. Accordingly, having regard to all other matters raised, and in the absence of any other conflict with the development plan, the appeal is allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR