



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 February 2022

by S Harley BSc(Hons) M.Phil MRTPI ARICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M3835/D/21/3286341

32 St Michaels Road, Heene, Worthing BN11 4RY

- 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 Singer against the decision of Worthing Borough Council.
 - The application Ref AWDM/1302/21, dated 06 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is replacement of dated side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036 January 2021 (the new LP) has been prepared. However, it has not progressed sufficiently to carry much weight in this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the host property, the adjoining property and the wider street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal site part of St Michael's Road is residential in character with a wide variety of house styles and sizes. There are a number of side extensions which have different designs to their host properties. No 32 is one half of a pair of three floor, semi-detached houses, in a group of two such pairs, slightly raised above street level. These dwellings are of similar, strong, design and appearance, comprising rendered stucco elevations, string courses, corncicing, two storey bays with balconies above and arched head dormers to the front. They are set back from the road behind brick and flint walls which are features common to the area and to the nearby Heene Conservation Area (the CA). The Council considers the property to be a non-designated heritage asset.
5. Existing windows have single horizontal glazing bars. The windows and doors are recessed with a simple arch at the top. The overall appearance of the front façade is a balance of the vertical and horizontal components and a balance between the minimalist appearance of the render and the ornate detailing.
6. No 32 has a single storey conservatory with a convoluted steeply glazed pitch roof which adjoins the semi-detached house at No 34. The conservatory has limited architectural merit and its design is not particularly sympathetic to the

host or adjoining properties. However, it is well set back from the front façades of Nos 32 and 34 and is not particularly prominent in most street scene views. It requires repair and its replacement would be acceptable in principle.

7. The part of the proposed extension closest to the street would be some 3.46m high which would be significantly lower than the highest parts of the existing conservatory; the part containing the proposed mezzanine would be set back about 4.67m from the front elevation, and would be about the same height as the highest part of the conservatory. The extension would have a much more solid appearance than the conservatory, which due to the extent of glazing appears light and airy. Also in contrast to the conservatory, the front wall of the proposed extension would be much closer to the front façades of the host property and No 34. Accordingly, as observed during my site visit, the proposed extension, due to its more forward position and the width of the gap between Nos 32 and 34, would be much more prominent visually from the street and over longer distances when travelling from both the east and the west, notwithstanding boundary walls and trees/vegetation. Moreover, even if additional planting took place, it would not be good design to rely on vegetation to obscure the proposed extension from the street.
8. I concur with the appellant that seeking to directly replicate the host dwelling would be unlikely to be successful. In principle a contemporary design, incorporating contemporary materials, would not be inappropriate and could accord with any modern design guidance that favours understated, light, minimalistic, geometric designs that remain visually distinct from the host.
9. However, in this instance the shape, sizes and proportions of the proposed openings are distinctly at odds with those of the host and neighbouring buildings; nor do any of the horizontal elements align. In particular there would be dissonance between the proposed roof lines and the string courses, which wrap around the corners of both Nos 32 and 34. In addition, the proposed window would appear to disrupt the fascia at the front. The combination of the large window to one side with no glazing bar; the mainly glazed door to the other; and the upper vertical wooden louvred windows; would not in my view amount to a neutral design that respects the host building and the adjoining property: rather it would conflict with, not complement, the existing properties and would undermine the host building's dominance. The discordances in the design would be amplified by the use of solid vertical timber/composite cladding drawing the eye away from the principal elevation.
10. For the above reasons I consider the proposed extension would not be sensitively located or appear lighter or subservient as suggested by the appellants. Nor do I consider the engineered timber appearance would correspond particularly well with natural trees locally, which are mainly in other parts of the street, whether or not it would match the oak sleepers of the garden design. Overall I consider that the proposed design, although it has some merit in itself, is harmful in this location because of its siting and the juxtaposition with Nos 32 and 34.
11. For the reasons set out above I conclude the proposed extension would have a harmful effect on the host property, the adjoining property and the wider street scene. Accordingly I find conflict with Saved Policy H16 of the Worthing Local Plan 2003 (the LP); Policy 16 of the Worthing Borough Core Strategy 2011 (the CS); Policy DM5 of the new LP; and those principles of the National Planning

Policy Framework that seeks good design that integrates well with the surroundings in terms of treatment of façades, characteristic materials and details. Nor do I consider the extension complies with the "Extending or altering your home" Supplementary Planning Guidance 2013 which, in requiring that development respects its context, is still relevant notwithstanding it predates the National Design Code.

Other Matters

12. The appeal site is close to the CA boundary. There is intervisibility between the two. However, due to the relatively small scale of the proposal and the intervening buildings, the proposal would not harm the setting in which the character and appearance of the CA is appreciated.
13. I acknowledge that the proposal was amended as a result of pre-application advice. However, this in itself does not lead me to any different conclusion in respect of the proposal before me.
14. The appellants have provided some limited details of examples where contemporary extensions have been acceptable. Based on the evidence I have seen I consider the Southwark case Ref 17/AP/3083 to be different because at least some of the horizontal elements pick up those of the existing building; the majority of the facing materials appear to be brick to matching the existing; and the cladding colour echoes that of the neighbouring property. The other two examples appear to be in rear gardens and not visible from the street.
15. None of these matters lead me to any different conclusion in respect of the main issue.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

16. The proposal would make good use of land and would be of sustainable construction. However these matters are to be expected from any development and do not significant weigh in favour of the proposal. I have found that the proposed extension would have a harmful effect on the host property, the adjoining property and the wider street scene and would conflict with Saved Policy H16 of the LP, Policy 16 of the CS and Policy DM5 of the emerging LP in this respect. In failing to comply with these Policies the proposal cannot be said to accord with the development plan as a whole. I have found insufficient material considerations to out weigh this conflict.
17. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Harley

INSPECTOR