

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2022

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B1415/D/22/3291208
144 Elphinstone Road, Hastings, TN34 2BN

- 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 Ms Valeria Jopson against the decision of Hastings Borough Council.
 - The application Ref HS/FA/21/00981, dated 20 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is the formation of dormer window to front elevation and associated internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the formation of dormer window to front elevation and associated internal alterations at 144 Elphinstone Road, Hastings, TN34 2BN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref HS/FA/21/00981, dated 20 October 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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 20.307/01A and 20.307/02A.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The two storey semi-detached appeal property has what has been called Tudorbethan detailing, popular in the mid-20th Century. A first floor front gable dormer is set upon a jettied timber arrangement and has mock Tudor timber frame detailing. Many, but not all, surrounding buildings also demonstrate some mock Tudor detailing, designs vary considerably. The area
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is one of pleasing established residential character and the suburban scene is an attractive one. The proposal is as described above.

4. The Council is concerned that the proposal by reason of siting and position would unbalance the uniformity of the semi-detached pair and erode the original design intention and character of the semi-detached pair. Given visibility in the street scene and this context the case is made that there will be harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling, the semi-detached pair and the wider area.
5. I recognise that the roofs of the pair are symmetrical although it is notable that seen as a whole the dwellings are not, due to changes at the ground floor on the neighbouring home. In the wider scene roofs vary considerably. The defining feature of the appeal property and its neighbour, along with a few others locally, is the proud and dominant front gable dormer. To my eye the proposed addition, markedly smaller, set back, lower at ridge, and higher at base, will not take away from the visual prominence and importance of that gable. It will be but a small adjunct. Whilst when seen from straight-on absolute paired roof symmetry would be lost, the fact is that other than in that rare one-off position, from either direction there will be no sense of imbalance. Furthermore, when it is seen, the detail of the small dormer would pick up the design and material cues from the host dwelling.
6. In summary, the appeal scheme would not be jarring on the eye; it would be suitably subservient to the host property and innocuous in the streetscene. Whilst the addition of a front dormer in many instances would be unacceptable I have to conclude that in this particular case, with this proposal, in this stretch of homes, character and appearance would be suitably preserved.
7. Policy DM1 of the Hastings Local Plan is relevant. Amongst other matters, it calls for protection of local character and distinctiveness with design being sympathetic to a site and its context. This is reflected in the objectives of the Council's SPD 'Householder Development Sustainable Design' (SPD) and its guidance that development has to comfortably align with a surrounding area. In all the circumstances I conclude that the proposal would not conflict with pertinent development plan policy or the aesthetic purposes of the SPD.

Conditions

8. The Council reasonably suggests the standard commencement condition along with a condition that works are to be carried out in accordance with listed, approved, plans as this provides certainty. The suggested condition requiring the use of matching materials is also appropriate in the interests of visual amenity.

Overall conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would not have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property or the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is allowed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR