The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 May 2022

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13TH June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/D/22/3296197
Hillsbrook, Herbert Road, Salcombe, TQ8 8HN

- 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 & Mrs A Fisher against the decision of South Hams District Council.
- The application Ref 3133/21/HHO, dated 10 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 12 January 2022.
- The development proposed is for alterations and reconstruction of first floor.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations and reconstruction of first floor at Hillsbrook, Herbert Road, Salcombe, TQ8 8HN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3133/21/HHO, dated 10 August 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: Site Location Plan 3987 .01 Rev A; Proposed Plans, Section A-A and B-B 3987 21 Rev R; and Proposed Elevations 3987 .20 Rev K.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on a) the character and appearance of the host property and the locality and b) living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property a detached two storey house on a sizeable rectangular plot in an elevated position with long distance views out from the rear. To the front roof slope are two large dormer windows and to the rear is a large 'box dormer' with roof balcony. The road has a varied range of detached homes with the character being one of an established good quality residential area and the street scene being pleasing.

4. The appeal scheme is to convert the dwelling to a reverse level layout, replace the existing roof and extend the hips to a gable design. The two existing front dormers would be replaced with one single central gable whilst at the rear of

the dwelling, the existing first floor box dormer would be replaced with three rear gables, each serving an enclosed first floor balcony accessed by full height glazed doors.

5. The Council is concerned that the proposal will appear as an incongruous addition to the host dwelling; neither sympathetic nor subordinate.

6. I would agree that the planned works would radically change the appearance of the existing home, it would become largely unrecognisable. However, I feel it is legitimate to step back, to a degree set the existing structure aside, and almost consider this significant re-modelling as if one might a new building and assess matters accordingly. Thus, rather than looking at roof alterations as extensions, one in this case considers the whole.

7. Taken in this light the change of external materials, with the move to render and slate, would be acceptable to my eye and indeed more characteristic of most homes found locally. Gables are also a frequently found feature, including alongside the appeal property. To my mind there would be a slight degree of ungainliness from some angles, if one focussed, due to the higher than main central gable ridge run, unfortunately not depicted on the Appellant's 'photorealistic images'. However, taken as a whole the building would appear coherent and of suitable scale, detail and architectural idiom. There would also likely be some energy efficiency gains and for sustainability reasons it is good to see continued use of considerable ground floor structure. The direction of travel is clear along this side of the road, glazing has and will increase at upper level to take advantage of views and provided that is not promoted to excessive and unbalanced degrees there can be design logic and quality to this. In the case of the appeal, the approach to recessing the glazing is a visually thoughtful solution to providing at least something of a discreet stance on fenestration.

8. In all the circumstances the scheme would be appropriate for this site and its environs.

9. Policies DEV20 and DEV23 of the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (LP), along with Policy SALB1 of the Salcombe Neighbourhood Plan, have relevance to the case. Taken together, and amongst other matters, they seek to ensure that development is of good design, integrating with its host property and surroundings, suitable in scale, form and visual qualities for its context, and protective of landscape and visual amenity. This is reflected in the advice and objectives of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document 2020 (SPD) albeit this document cannot be expected by way of detailed example or statement to cover every eventuality and is *guidance*.

10. I conclude that on this issue the proposal would not conflict with the relevant development plan policies and the pertinent aims of the SPD.

Living conditions

11. Although seemingly not completely against the principle of living rooms at first floor in this instance the Council expresses concern that reverse layout would unduly intensify use with more overlooking, noise and disturbance, and overbearing impacts upon those in neighbouring gardens.

12. However, I am cognisant of an existing unscreened balcony, upper-level rear facing glazing, and a projecting side window and, even without use of any 'permitted development' rights, the not inconsiderable opportunities for overlooking at present. The side window is to be removed and new balconies would have side screens.

13. My observation is that houses here do not presently offer any great degree of garden privacy because of layout relationships and scale and proximity of fenestration and balconies. The focus of most rooms is towards the attractive long-distance views and it is inevitable that reverse layouts have been put in place locally and will be sought to maximise the outlook opportunity. Similarly, people in gardens on this stretch of road will generally be more interested in what lies to the south east rather than the arrangement of the home alongside. With the scale, use and positioning of the appeal proposals I would assess that an undue overbearing impact would not arise, the relationship would remain a comfortable one. Furthermore, the planned new balconies would not have any great capacity and I am not persuaded they would lead to inordinate noise and disturbance through normal use.

14. LP Policy DEV1 seeks to secure development which would not be unduly harmful to residential amenity. Given the above I conclude that the proposal would not conflict with the policy aim of protecting living conditions.

Conditions

15. The Council reasonably suggests the standard commencement condition along a condition that works are to be carried out in accordance with listed, approved, plans; to provide certainty. In terms of the suggested condition relating to a further process for agreeing the precise nature, finish and fitting of the natural slate which is to be used; I consider this addition relating to the submitted material would be an unnecessary burden given its location, scale, context and the fact that this is not, for example, a Conservation Area

Overall conclusion

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

D Cramond

INSPECTOR