



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 July 2022

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17TH August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/22/3301543
15 Portsmouth Lane, Lindfield, RH16 1SE

- 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 R Lewry against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/22/0850, dated 17 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as a 2-storey side extension, single storey rear extension, new gables over existing dormers, new porch canopy.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to a 2-storey side extension, new gables over existing dormers and new porch canopy. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to a single storey rear extension at 15 Portsmouth Lane, Lindfield, RH16 1SE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DM/22/0850, dated 17 March 2022, and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 3) The single storey rear extension hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 045.22.02a and 045.22.01c.
 - 4) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the single storey rear extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. This part of Portsmouth Road is characterised by detached family sized two storey houses which are set back from the street within large mature landscaped plots. Many of the dwellings are at least partially screened from the street scene by mature boundary planting and trees. This includes the appeal dwelling which occupies an elevated position, set back from the street

scene from which is screened by mature shrubs and trees. The dwelling is also screened on its southern side by a bank and dense planting.

4. The dwellings are individually designed and include a variety of roof forms and design features. Amongst other things this includes gable and catslide roof, crown roofs and two storey front projections. Front and rear building lines vary and many of the dwellings have front and/or rear projections. These features, together with the abundance of soft planting and sloping ground levels, contributes to the informal and verdant character and appearance of the locality.
5. The appeal dwelling comprises a wide modern suburban style dwelling, with a catslide roof and flat roofed dormers on the front elevation. It has a two storey side extension whose roof pitch and height follow that of the host dwelling and whose eaves line is consistent with the flat roof over the adjacent front dormers. To the front of the entrance is a wide flat roofed canopy which sits below the catslide roof. At first floor level the window widths and glazing panels are uniform and at ground floor level the windows are deeper but adhere to the same width glazing panels. These features, result in the dwelling having an uncluttered and balanced appearance, with strong horizontal lines. The rear elevation similarly has strong horizontal lines and an uncluttered appearance.
6. Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018 (LP), promotes well located and designed development that reflects and retains the character and identity of villages. Development should create a sense of place whilst addressing the scale and character of the locality and should also optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development. Consistent with this, policies E9 and H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan 2016 (NP), seek to ensure that new development protects and reinforces local character. The scale, height and form of extensions should fit unobtrusively with the host building and the character of the street scene.
7. Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021(framework), similarly seeks to ensure that new development is of high-quality design, reflects the distinctive character of the area and addresses the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.
8. The aim of the of the Mid Sussex Design Guide - Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to deliver high quality new development that responds positively to its context. With this in mind the SPD sets out principles and objectives that aim to inspire designers and assist applicants in the process of delivering high quality and well-designed development. Principles DG49 and DG50 of the SPD advise that the design of extensions should be informed by local character and should respond to the design of the host dwelling. Side extensions should normally be subservient to the host dwelling and should normally be set back from the front of the house. This is to retain the proportions of the original house and to reduce the visual impact of the join between the host dwelling and the extension. Front extensions are more likely to be acceptable where the building line is staggered or where the building is set back from the road.
9. The proposed deep two storey side extension would be attached to the existing side extension. It would be seven metres wide and would project forward of the host dwelling by more than seven metres. At the front the proposed two story extension would have a deep catslide roof and hipped roof dormer

window, which would be wider than the existing first floor windows. Below this window would be a wide top vent ground floor window. Large areas of this elevation would be dominated by brickwork and tiling. On the northern side of the proposed extension there would similarly be a large expanse of brickwork/tile hanging above the proposed double garage door. To the rear of the catslide roof would be a hipped crown roof, which would sit above the proposed dormer window and match the ridge height of the existing dwelling.

10. The proposed siting of the front projection is informed by local character and the constraints and opportunities of the site. Further, it would not result in an awkward junction between the existing house and the extension. Notwithstanding this, as a result of its combined mass; proportions; design detailing; and large expanses of tiling, brickwork and garage doors, the front section of the proposed side extension would fail to respect the proportions of the host dwelling and would be visually overbearing. In reaching this conclusion I have taken into account its recessed position.
11. The proposed gables over the existing flat roofed dormers appear slightly unbalanced due to their failure to align symmetrically with the dormer windows below. In addition, the juxtaposition between the ridge line of the porch and the first-floor window above is cramped and unbalanced. Whilst these are small details, together with the projecting side extension they would result in the house appearing poorly proportioned and disjointed.
12. It is acknowledged that the side extension and front additions would be largely screened from the street scene. However, this does not mitigate the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the associated conflict with the above policies and guidance objectives.
13. To the rear, the proposed side extension would reflect the eaves and ridge lines, the overall strong horizontal lines and external materials of the host dwelling. As a consequence, it would respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
14. However, in this instance the identified harm to the front of the host dwelling would materially outweigh the acceptability of the rear part of the extension and the benefits for the appellant and their family that would result from the proposed additional accommodation and integral garage. This harm is not something that could be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of conditions.
15. The appellant has stated that a detached garage and office building has been approved to the side of the appeal dwelling. As few details and no drawings for this building have been submitted it is not possible to compare it to the appeal scheme. However, as a detached building sited a metre to the side of the host dwelling, it is unlikely to be directly comparable to the appeal scheme.
16. Conversely, the proposed single storey rear extension would respect and reinforce the proportions and appearance of the host dwelling. As a result, subject to the use of matching materials and adherence to the submitted drawings, it would reflect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and be readily assimilated into the rear garden environment. As stated by the council, this could be secured through the imposition of conditions. The council has also suggested a condition relating to the protection of existing trees. Whilst such a condition would be necessary for the proposed side extension, it would not be necessary for the single storey rear extension. This is because

the extension would be sited away from the trees on the southern side of the appeal site.

17. I conclude on the main issue that the proposed two storey side extension would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling. It would conflict with DP Policy DP26, NP Policies E9 & H9, SPD Principles DG49 & DG50 and Paragraph 130 of the Framework. The proposed single storey rear extension would respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and thus would comply with these policies and guidance.

Other matters

18. The appellant has raised concerns about the handling of the planning application by the council. These concerns are not material to the consideration of the merits of the proposal, but are a matter that could be taken up directly with the council.

Conclusion

19. In view of the acceptability of the single storey rear extension I have considered the possibility of issuing a split decision. I find that this would be possible because the single storey rear extension is physically and functionally independent from the two storey side extension.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR