



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 September 2022

by Rebecca Thomas MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 November 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/22/3302875

22 Highcroft Road, Sharpthorne, West Sussex RH19 4NJ

- 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 M Crockett against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/22/1349, dated 27 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with hip to gable and rear cat slide roof over 1st floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area and that of the host dwelling.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey semi-detached dwelling, being the first dwelling on Highcroft Road, which adjoins Station Road and the junction with Top Road. The dwelling boundary with Station Road and Top Road is a mature hedge, set back from an area of grass which forms the corner between Top Road and Station Road. The side elevation of the house is visible, in particular the first floor and roof elements. Dwellings tend to be single storey or two storey and I was able to see varying roof extensions in the local area.
4. The building is brick built, with tile hangings to the first floor and a tiled, hipped roof. This matches that of the adjoining property. The front elevation has a covered flat roof porch, with small single storey additions to the side and rear. I was also able to see that the house has two hipped-gable dormer windows to the rear roof slope, as well as two rooflight windows. I was able to see that the neighbouring property at no. 21 appears to have been extended to the side, with a dormer window in the lower roof slope, which is extended from the existing hip.
5. The proposal would introduce a rear dormer extension which would extend across the full width of the dwelling, and include the insertion of three rooflights above this. The development would also include the alteration of the existing hipped gable end to a simple gable and a window to the second floor level.

6. Principle DG54 of the Design Guide¹ states that dormer windows should be small and sited appropriately in the roof-slope, well above the eaves line, well below the ridge line and set in from the gable ends. It goes on to state that two or three smaller dormers are often more successful than a single large dormer.
7. Despite the use of matching materials, and being set down slightly from the ridgeline, the dormer window would be an unduly dominant and incongruous feature. I accept that the dormer extension would not entirely occupy the full width of the existing roof, nonetheless the overall effect of the proposed dormer would remain dominant. Although views of the dormer in its entirety from the street would be limited, the changes to the roof slope would still be visible due to the prominent location of the dwelling on the junction. The alterations to the hipped gable in combination with the cat-slide roof would contribute to the dominance of the development to the dwelling and the character and appearance of the local area, detracting from the original form and legibility of the building as a two storey dwelling. This would be in sharp contrast to the original and the character and appearance of the adjoining neighbouring property at no. 21.
8. Whilst I accept that the overall character and appearance of the local area is of a variety of dwellings with different alterations, I consider therefore that the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area generally.
9. My attention has been drawn to other dormers in the area. The circumstances in each proposal are likely to be different, and in any event the fact that apparently similar dormers may have been permitted is not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development. I also note that there have been no objections from neighbours or the parish council. However, I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits and concluded that it would cause harm for the reasons set out above.
10. For all of these reasons, I therefore conclude that the proposed development to provide a gable and rear cat slide roof over the first floor rear extension would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. This would be contrary to policy DP26 of the District Plan² and of the Design Guide to which I have had due regard. These policies require (amongst other things) the protection of the character and appearance of a locality through high quality design that reflects and responds to local character. As a result, the proposal would also be contrary to a core planning principle of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') which in relation to new development seeks to secure high quality design.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

Rebecca Thomas

INSPECTOR

¹ Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (November 2020)

² Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (March 2018)