

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2022

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C3810/D/22/3305015

Reed Cottage, Westergate Street, Woodgate, Chichester PO20 3SQ

- 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 Andrew Collingridge against the decision of Arun District Council.
 - The application Ref AL/85/22/HH, dated 13 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2022.
 - The development proposed the erection of detached garage with room above and 1 x dormer following the demolition of existing detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I take the site address from the appeal form which appears to me to narrow down the site more explicitly than the application form or decision notice.
3. I use the Council's description of development which is more precise than the application form; I note the Appellant also uses this on the appeal form.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on a) the character and appearance of the site and surrounds and b) on living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site is a relatively large plot with a sizeable detached bungalow and a range of structures most notably a detached double panelled garage in the north west corner of the garden. The site is accessed via a long driveway and sits within surrounds of varied house types including abutting the ends of rear gardens of dwellings in a development to the west. The locality is of established residential character with the varied buildings and open land coming together to create a scene of pleasing appearance. The appeal proposal is as described above and would provide for extensive garaging space with an upper level office served by a dormer and eaves triangle window.
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6. The existing garage structure is both sizeable in footprint and unattractive in appearance when one looks closely, its removal would be a positive in terms of aesthetics albeit it does not unduly catch the eye due to its low profile. The proposed new building would be markedly larger in all dimensions than the building to be removed. In my opinion the scheme would appear as over-ambitious in bulk, height and site coverage. The sense of a secondary building being ancillary to the main dwelling would be lost when an outbuilding on this plot reaches these overall dimensions relative to the host property. The dominance would be appreciable and the appearance would be of unfortunate overdevelopment. The scheme would look out of kilter and something of an incongruous anomaly by reason of its scale.
7. Policy D DM1(1) of the Arun Local Plan (LP) is relevant. Amongst other matters, it seeks to ensure that development is of good design quality with protection of a site's character and embodying suitable scale, massing and layout for its context. I conclude that there would be conflict with this policy.

Living conditions

8. I take the Appellant's points about orientation which would limit over-shadowing such that if this had been the only concern, I might well have not seen it as decisive. However, I do believe that the appeal scheme would have an overbearing impact upon immediate neighbours to the east. The bulk and height of the building would too extensive and too proximate. Even with the planned changes to the boundary demarcation and removal of the existing structure there would be an uncomfortable sense of being hemmed-in. I appreciate that current residents did not object to the proposal but I must protect amenity for the long term.
9. LP Policy D DM1(3) is pertinent here. In parallel with relevant objectives in the Arun Design Guide (DG), it seeks to ensure that new development would protect standards of residential amenity for neighbours. Given the foregoing I would conclude that the appeal scheme would conflict with this policy and the DG.

Other matters

10. I do understand the Appellant's wish to update and improve the ancillary facilities and remove the existing sub-standard building which would helpfully also allow more suitable boundary treatment. The choice of materials is very thoughtful and I would envisage that this plot should offer scope for some garage and office arrangement; it is simply that the scheme as presented is, regrettably, too large. I note the examples of development which have been allowed that have been drawn to my attention but I found none of these to be directly comparable due to matters such as siting and form and, in any event, I must assess the appeal scheme on its own merits. It is unfortunate that the Appellant feels the Council did not engage on the question of amended plans although it will be appreciated that this is not a matter for me. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issues identified above.

11. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered; the Council's policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the site and surrounds as well as on living conditions for neighbours. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR