



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 March 2023

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P1425/D/23/3313999 2 Farm Close, Seaford, BN25 3RX

- 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 Alfred Armadhi against the decision of Lewes District Council.
 - The application Ref LW/22/0562, dated 16 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is hip to gable roof extension to both ends, installation of rear dormer, enlargement of front dormer and alterations to fenestration on all elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I use the Council's description of development which is more concise than the application or appeal forms.
3. The hip to gable extensions have been completed by means of 'permitted development' and other alterations, for example to windows, have been undertaken on this property. The proposals I am now considering are effectively the proposed new front and rear dormers.

Main Issues

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

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal property is a modernised detached bungalow on a corner plot partly below road level. It lies within estate development which has mainly bungalows predominating albeit this site has two storey homes to the east. The locality is of established residential character with generally subtle streetscenes and an overall pleasing appearance from the combination of, usually low key, homes and their gardens. The proposal I am considering is for a replacement front dormer on the 'front' facing Farm Close and a box dormer running along most of the 'rear' roof elevation which lies to the north and is alongside the side flank of 29 Chyngton Gardens.
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6. The front dormer would have a pitched roof and full front glazing in four vertical panes. It is of such a scale that it would be wildly disproportionate to what lies below in terms of the front elevation and its fenestration and as a projection in the pitched roof itself. The dormer would be unduly bulky, look alien and awkward in the streetscene, and generally represent poor design with little regard to the host property or the nature of its surrounds. There would be no suitable degree of subtlety.
7. The rear dormer regrettably raises similar issues in my mind to the front albeit this is not so markedly out of scale and does have an advantage of ground levels and viewpoints working in its favour. However, it would take up too much of the roof pitch and this is primarily because of its undue proximity to the eastern gable end. In simple terms the dormer would be too long. The overall bulk would thus be excessive and would create a cumbersome top-heavy roof structure which again would not represent good design and would look ill-at-ease in the generally visually polite streetscene.
8. Given the foregoing, I conclude that there would be conflict with Policy DM28 of the Lewes District Local Plan (LP). This policy, amongst other matters, seeks to secure development which would be sympathetic in form and scale to an existing building, respects the character of the locality, and generally be of good design in a style which accords with the locality and streetscene appearance.

Living conditions

9. The planned rear dormer would have an unfortunate relationship to a generally private part of the rear garden of the dwelling to the north (29 Chyngton Gardens). Even with vegetation there would be scope for downward, slightly diagonal, looking from the closest proposed bedroom window at the western end which would be intrusive and unsettling. I note the Appellant's offer to obscure glaze this window, and presumably limit openings, but even then there would be a regrettable perception of overlooking and discomfort this would bring. This bedroom window would simply be too close to a key part of the neighbouring property.
10. LP Policy DM28 is also pertinent under this issue as it seeks to safeguard residential amenity enjoyed from within existing homes and gardens. I conclude that the appeal proposal would run contrary to this policy.

Other matters

11. I do understand the Appellant's wish to further extend this property to increase and improve the present accommodation. I can see that thought has been given to selection, and at times re-use, of materials and energy efficiency generally. I considered the range of other local developments drawn to my attention but I do not know the planning circumstances, found none to be directly comparable in terms of form, scale or siting, and in any case not all represented positive design benchmarks. In any event I must determine the case before me on its own merits. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation the main issue identified above.

12.I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policy which I cite mirrors relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

13.For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality as well as on living conditions for neighbours. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR