

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2023

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/23/3320966

27 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex BN6 9AB

- 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 Tom Freestone against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application, Ref. DM/23/0162, dated 19 January 2023 was refused by notice dated 15 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension to the north; re-building of garage structure to the south. Rear single storey extension with roof terrace over. Loft conversion with dormer roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that the appeal dwelling is part of a varied street scene but with a consistent feature of substantial gaps at roof level that create a spacious and semi-rural character. However, in the case of the appeal dwelling's more immediate context, both Nos. 25 and 29 draw the eye with the high eaves line to their flank walls and the latter appearing rather squeezed on to its site, with minimal gaps at the side boundaries to Nos. 27 & 31.
 4. The effect of this is to form a constraint on both the scale and form of proposed extensions to the dwelling. Clearly there is a large gap to No. 29 which can accommodate an extension of a substantial scale. And in a situation where the existing building in its present form is of no great merit (and not helped in this case by the visibility from the road of the side garage extension and the rearward addition on the northern flank), I consider that the 'alternative approach' referred to in paragraph DG49 the Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2020 ('the SPD') would be appropriate.
 5. This appeal scheme follows this alternative approach insofar as the development does not obviously seek to be subordinate to the existing building. Also, both the scale and design of the alterations and additions would significantly change the appearance of the dwelling and its contribution to the
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street scene. However even though, with a minor exception, the ridge line would be lower than that of Nos. 25 and 29 and the roofs would slope away from these neighbours, the extended building would appear overly large for its context.

6. The outcome would be one where in the run of buildings comprising Nos. 25 to 31 there would be a harmful dominance of built form with no meaningful gaps for views to the countryside beyond, albeit I acknowledge this is partly because of the existing characteristics of Nos. 25 and 29 that I refer to in paragraph 1 above, and in particular the inadequate space between Nos. 29 and 31. Nonetheless it is for the proposed development to respond appropriately to the constraints of the site and its setting and any wider implications.
7. Furthermore, the over-detailed design of the extended building would increase the harm caused. On a site with much more space around it and the potential for mature landscaping, the design and hence appearance might well be acceptable. However, in this case I consider that the scheme has been led too much by the appellant's space and layout requirements and not enough by recognition of its context.
8. The outcome of this is that the principal elevations would be too complicated and cluttered, particularly above eaves level with a miscellany of roof shapes and sizes, in my view correctly described in the officer's report as resulting in 'an unbalanced and disjointed appearance'. In the street scene this would appear incongruous and out of keeping with the more simple design approach, even including that of the bespoke frontage of No. 27.
9. I have carefully considered the grounds of appeal but differ in my analysis of the existing dwelling and streetscene and the effect of the proposed development. I am therefore not persuaded that, on balance, the proposal would comply with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 adopted in 2018; Principles DG49 & DG50 of the SPD, and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Other Matters

10. There are three objections from neighbours which include an alleged effect on a number of aspects of 'neighbouring amenity'. These do not form part of the Council's case and whilst I have had regard to them on their individual merits I consider that the officer's report has fully explained why they do not add to the objections to the proposal.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons explained above and having had regard to all other matters raised the appeal fails.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR