



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 January 2024

by D Wilson BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/D/23/3320763

3 Hamsey Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1NP

- 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 Miss Stevie Robinson against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/22/05621/HOUS, dated 28 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with hip to gable conversion and dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In December 2023 a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. However, in respect of the main issues for consideration in this appeal, the revised Framework has not changed Government Policy and so the cases for the appeal parties have not been prejudiced. I shall consider the appeal accordingly. In respect of the paragraphs submitted that are no longer correct, I have considered the most relevant paragraph in the current Framework.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. No 3 Hamsey Crescent is a semi-detached dwelling located on a predominantly residential street. The other dwellings in the area are mostly semi-detached with a similar appearance to the appeal property. While there is some variation within the street scene and not all dwellings are entirely symmetrical, there is an established pattern of hipped roofs. As a result, the street scene has a strong symmetry which No 3 positively contributes to.
5. The Council's Adopted Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document July 2022 (Design Guide), amongst other things, seeks to ensure that domestic extensions respect the size and character of the house and are designed to maintain the houses original appearance. In respect of properties or streets with a very uniform roof design, significant alterations to the roof are generally unacceptable.

6. The proposal seeks to extend the hipped roof of No 3 into a gable end. This would extend the width of No 3 and create a larger dwelling, which combined with the change in roof form, would unbalance the appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings. No 3 and the attached dwelling at No 1 are the first dwellings on the street that front the road on this side of Hamsey Crescent which would highlight the prominence of the proposal and its unbalancing effect.
7. The Design Guide has specific guidance on dormers and seeks to ensure they do not dominate the roof and are kept away from the ridge and edge of the roof.
8. The proposed rear dormer would extend across the majority of the roof and be positioned close to the ridgeline. Most of the pitched roof form would therefore be lost. The overall result would be a dominant feature due to its overall siting, scale, form and massing that would be determinantal to the character of the host dwelling.
9. I note that there is an extant planning permission for a two storey side and single storey rear extension. However, while this would result in a large addition to the side of the appeal property, the roof form would remain unaltered, and it therefore would not have the same unbalancing effect that the proposal would.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and host dwelling. It would be contrary to Policies SD5 and SD31 of the South Downs Local Plan Adopted 2 July 2019 (2014-33) and Policy PL2 of the Lewes Town Council Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2033. Amongst other things, these seek to ensure developments contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place through its relationship to adjoining buildings and respects established character of the local area.
11. The proposal would also be contrary to the Design Guide.

Other Matters

12. The proposal would create employment for local builders and trades people which would contribute to the local economy. It is also proposed to be built with sustainable and locally sources materials. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
13. The Council have found that the proposal would cause no harm to residential amenity or dark skies. It would also provide more usable space for the occupiers and would not cause harm through waste, pollution and biodiversity. I have no reason to conclude otherwise; however, these are neutral matters that do not outweigh the harm.
14. The appellant has referred to several examples of developments in the area in order to justify the proposal. I do not have the full details in respect of such developments so I cannot be sure of the circumstances of these. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits, based on the evidence before me.
15. However, from site observations there is a rear dormer at 19 Hamsey Crescent but views from the frontage are limited to appreciate the full size. While I note that there is a hip to gable roof extension, the width of the dwelling is narrower

than the appeal property due to their being no attached garage or porch like many of the other dwellings in Hamsey Crescent. Therefore, while the character of the dwelling has been altered, the effect is not as prominent as the appeal proposal.

16. 29 Hamsey Crescent includes a front dormer window; however, this is not something that is proposed in the appeal before me. Alterations have been made to the roof; however, the roof line generally matches other dwellings nearby which includes 31 and 33 Hamsey Crescent which have had similar alterations.
17. 35 Hamsey Crescent has been altered in a similar way to the appeal proposal before me. However, the location of No 35 is towards other end of the road of the appeal proposal and it is therefore not as prominent within the street scene.
18. In regard to 79 and 81 Highdown Road, while the design of the dwellings is similar, the character and appearance of this road is different in that the road steeply rises and the rooflines have a stepped appearance which is characteristic of the road. While the roofs have been altered and rear dormers have been added, the characteristic stepped roofline has been maintained.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons set out above, having had regard to the development plan read as a whole, and all other material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

D Wilson

INSPECTOR