



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2024

by **D Cramond** BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/23/3330514

70 New England Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3LD

- 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 Ms Gene Lowson against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/23/0754, dated 16 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is two storey rear extension, internal configuration, window alterations, new external stairs to first floor of garage extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. For reasons of planning history, the principal parties agree that, effectively, the elements within the overall scheme for my determination are the external stairs and a French Door. I shall proceed on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached two storey home with a lower-ridged two storey extension set to its side comprising garage and floorspace over. The road as a whole is of established character and mainly comprises well-designed dwellings which come together to create a pleasing streetscene. The host property in particular has a very attractive detailed front elevation and whilst the side extension is clearly of more recent times it has a suitable degree of detail, attention to matching window embellishment, and is subtle and subservient in its siting and form.
 5. The relevant part of the overall proposal is a semi-spiral timber staircase, facing the street lying down the side wall of the main part of the dwelling, leading to a new French Door (replacing a window) giving the scope for independent access to the floorspace over the side garage.
 6. Given the architectural and visual qualities of the appeal property and the collective contribution which well-designed homes make to this stretch of street
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it is important to treat any change which would be seen from the road with care. Unfortunately, I consider that the erection of an open staircase leading to a first-floor entrance door above the garage on this property would not reach the benchmark needed. The scheme would look alien in its immediate and wider context and its incongruity would be ill at ease on the eye. It would detract from the qualities of the host building. Forward facing elevations here are typical of an established residential street being traditional in form and domestic in nature and the appeal scheme would fail to align with this overarching framework.

7. Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and Policies E9 and H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan are relevant. Taken together and amongst other matters they seek to ensure that new development is well-designed and would: protect the character of the built environment; be unobtrusive in the streetscene; be compatible with existing structures; and embody suitable layout and design. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal scheme would conflict with these policies. It would also run contrary to the parallel objectives of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD albeit that document could not be expected to cover in detail every eventuality.

Other matters

8. I sympathise with the Appellant's wish to future proof the home and I can see that thought has been given to circulation in the immediate and longer term. I note that the opportunity would be taken to enhance the built structure of this extension area and materials have been carefully considered. I hope that a reconfiguration can be found that might help serve the needs of relatives or carers because, to my mind, regrettably the current proposal is not acceptable in its own right for the reasons I have given. 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 issue identified above.
9. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR