



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 January 2024

by J Reid BA(Hons) BArch(Hons) RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/23/3329979

Ashburn, The Green, Horsted Keynes, West Sussex RH17 7AW

- 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 Lawrence Wintergold against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref DM/23/1765, dated 4 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is "1 1/2 Storey rear extension, single storey side extension and dormer windows".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Horsted Keynes Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The 2 storey chalet style appeal dwelling includes its upper floor mainly within its front gabled roof space. The dwelling is prominently sited within the Conservation Area on the roughly south side of The Green. The roughly C18 2 storey Crown Inn (The Crown), which is listed in Grade II, lies next door to roughly west. The roughly C18 2 storey pair of cottages at 5 and 6 The Green (the listed cottages), which is listed in Grade II, lies roughly east, and the end of the dwelling's back garden adjoins the cricket ground to roughly south.
4. The Conservation Area is mainly characterised by its historic development pattern, its listed and historic buildings, their range of styles, and the sympathetic relationships between them and with its open spaces including the spacious Green. The traditional forms and features of most buildings, use of local building materials, and landscape features including trees and hedgerows are important to the Conservation Area's appearance, and to its significance as a historic rural settlement. Due to its simple compact form and mostly traditional appearance, the appeal dwelling makes a minor positive contribution to the character and the appearance of the Conservation Area.
5. The proposal would include a deep asymmetrically sited 2 storey back extension that would be nearly as tall and almost as wide as the existing dwelling, a deep single storey lean-to side extension, one larger dormer window in place of the smaller of the 2 existing dormers, 2 more similarly large dormers, and 4 more roof lights.

6. However, in combination with the other parts of the proposal, due to its discordant lop-sided siting, and its substantial scale, the gabled back extension would significantly erode the dwelling's compact form. The French doors, windows and glass balustraded balcony in the upper floor, which would be squeezed-in under the eaves, would be unacceptably dissonant features. The tall balcony screen that would be necessary to protect the neighbouring occupiers' privacy in their back garden would be an additional inharmonious feature. The intermittent vegetation in and by the site could not be relied upon to partly screen the proposal in the long term. So, the proposal would be incongruous in views from and across the cricket ground, from the grounds at the backs of the neighbouring buildings, and from the dwelling's back garden. Thus, due to its scale, bulk and detailed design, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling. In consequence, it would harmfully diminish the appeal dwelling's minor positive contribution to the character and the appearance of the Conservation Area.
7. Due to their siting, The Crown and the listed cottages are within each other's wider settings. Because the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling, this development within their settings would detract from their special architectural interest and their significance as a historic inn and as a pair of historic cottages respectively. So, whilst the wider settings of listed buildings would reasonably be expected to evolve to some extent over time, insofar as the proposal would damage the character and the appearance of the appeal dwelling and the Conservation Area, it would fail to preserve the settings of The Crown and the listed cottages.
8. Insufficient information about the other developments that were referred to by the appellant has been put to me, so they provide little support for this damaging scheme. I have also had regard to my colleague's appeal decision ref APP/D3830/D/22/3306516, but as the scheme before my colleague included a 2 storey side extension, it differed from the proposal before me. So, I have dealt with the proposal on its merits and in accordance with its site specific circumstances and relevant local and national policy and guidance.
9. In the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, that is, the Conservation Area. The public benefits of the proposal, which could include jobs during construction, would not outweigh the harm that the proposal would cause to the heritage asset as a whole. Moreover, insufficient clear and convincing justification has been put to me to explain why the proposal would be necessary to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
10. Therefore, I consider that the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It would be contrary to Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (LP) and Policy HK4 of the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 (NP) which seek high quality design and respect for context, LP Policies DP34 and DP35 which reflect the thrust of my statutory duties regarding listed buildings and conservation areas respectively, NP Policy HK5 which aims for extensions to fit unobtrusively with the existing building, NP Policy HK6 which seeks to conserve local heritage, guidance in the Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, and the Framework which aims for heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be

enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Conclusion

11. I have found that the proposed development would be contrary to the Development Plan when taken as a whole. The other considerations in this case, including the Framework, do not outweigh that conflict.
12. For the reasons given, the appeal should be dismissed.

J Reid

INSPECTOR