Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visits made on 9 October 2026

by N Perrins MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 October 2026

Appeal Ref: 6015092
9 Rosslyn Avenue, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex BN43 6WJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Duncan Wright against the decision of Adur District Council.
- The application Ref is AWDM/0509/26.
- The development proposed is a front elevation dormer window on the first floor.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Costs

2. The appellant has made an application for a full award of costs, which is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary matters

3. The application form describes two elements: a single storey rear extension, which the appellant considers to be permitted development, and a front dormer. The Council's decision notice describes the development as a front dormer, and its reason for refusal relates only to the dormer. I have determined the appeal on the same basis. Whether the rear extension is permitted development is not a matter before me.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal property is one of a group of 14 inter-war semi-detached houses on the eastern side of Rosslyn Avenue, set back from the road behind a wide grassed verge. The houses have prominent paired front gables, hipped main roofs and catslide roofs sweeping down beside the gables. Apart from some half dormers on the side roof slopes and a few rooflights, the front roof slopes of the group are unaltered. The houses are notably uniform in their appearance, in contrast to the varied mix of dwellings on the opposite side of the road. The same house type lines both sides of nearby Gordon Avenue, where the front roof slopes are similarly unaltered, and also appears in Gordon Road, although there it is among a greater

variety of house types and alterations. Although the appeal property has solar panels on its front roof slope, these do not undermine the consistent roofscape of the group, which contributes positively to the character of the street.

6. The proposal is a flat-roofed dormer set within the front catslide roof, measuring about 2.6m wide, 1.4m high and projecting about 1.4m from the roof slope. It would be faced in brick slips to match the existing walls.

7. Development Management Standard No 2 Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings (DMS2) states that extensions should be in keeping with the appearance, scale, design and character of both the existing dwelling and the street scene. It also states that, on a dwelling with a pitched roof, extensions visible from the street should also have a pitched roof. Paragraph 3.12 further states that front dormers may not be acceptable where there are currently no other front dormers in a particular street scene.

8. Although it would sit below the main hip, the dormer would fill almost the full width of the narrow area of roof between the front gable and the outer edge of the catslide. On the front elevation, the roof slope of the gable would cut across the left-hand part of the dormer face, and the window would be pushed to the outer edge, leaving an expanse of blank brick-slip walling beside it. Little of the catslide would remain visible below or beside the dormer, making the structure appear squeezed into the available space rather than designed in proportion to the roof.

9. The flat roof and box form of the dormer would also contrast awkwardly with the pitched and hipped roof forms that define these houses, contrary to the DMS2 principle that extensions to pitched-roof dwellings visible from the street should have a pitched roof. It would crowd the side of the projecting gable and break up the simple sweep of the catslide roof, which is one of the defining features of the house type. Faced in brick slips rather than tiles, it would read as an extension of the walls rather than a subordinate feature of the roof.

10. The proposal would also introduce the only front dormer within the group of 14 houses in Rosslyn Avenue. Because the houses are set back behind an open verge, their front roof slopes are clearly visible in the street, and the dormer would be readily seen. Together with the harm I have described to the host dwelling from the siting and design of the proposal, it would appear as a prominent and isolated departure from the established roofscape and would undermine the uniform character of the group. That is the circumstance in which paragraph 3.12 of DMS2 indicates that a front dormer may not be acceptable.

11. The appellant contends that the dormer is modest and subordinate, that the site is not in a conservation area and the building is not listed, and that the Council's guidance does not prohibit front dormers. I accept that the dormer is not large in absolute terms. While DMS2 does not prohibit front dormers, it identifies streets with no existing front dormers as places where they may not be acceptable, and Policy 15 of the Adur Local Plan 2017 (LP) expects proposals to comply with the criteria in DMS2. The guidance therefore carries significant weight in this case. Moreover, the effect of a roof addition depends on how it relates to the roof it is placed in, and here the dormer would take up almost the full width of a narrow section of roof. The absence of a heritage designation does not reduce the importance of good design in this street, where the consistency of the group is its main quality.

12. The appellant also refers to front dormers at 118 Gordon Road and on Rosslyn Road. No 118 is the same house type as the appeal property and has a flat-roofed dormer in a similar position. The Council states that it was approved in the early 1990s, before the current development plan and DMS2 were adopted. From what I saw, the dormer appears as a plain, utilitarian box pressed against the side of the gable, which illustrates the harm I have identified rather than showing that a dormer of this form would be acceptable. The supporting text to LP Policy 15 makes clear that existing poor design should not set a precedent. No 118 is also seen in a street with a greater mix of house types, on a property whose frontage has been further altered by a large single-storey front extension. That is a different context from the uniform group in which the appeal property sits.

13. No details of the dormer referred to on Rosslyn Road, including its planning history or the type of building on which it sits, are before me. Nor is it within the group of houses in which the appeal property sits, which, as I have described, are notably uniform and have no front dormers. Neither example leads me to a different conclusion. In any event, each proposal must be considered on its own merits.

14. The appellant also raises the handling of the application. The earlier proposal, Ref AWDM/0724/25, was refused, and the appellant states that a planning officer then described a revised design as a considerable improvement that could be supported in the absence of objections. Informal officer comments do not bind the Council's formal decision. The Council's report on the appeal application assessed whether the revised scheme overcame the previous reason for refusal and explained why it found that it did not. The Council's report on the earlier application indicates that the dormer then proposed had a hipped roof and was in a similar position in the roof slope. The merits of that scheme are not before me, and I have assessed the appeal proposal on its own merits for the reasons given above.

15. To conclude, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. It would conflict with LP Policy 15, which requires development to be of high architectural quality and to respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area. Policy 15 also expects extensions and alterations to dwellings to comply with the criteria in DMS2, with which the proposal would conflict. It would also be contrary to the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

16. The proposal would allow the family bathroom to be moved to the first floor. This is a private benefit to which I give limited weight. The absence of harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and the lack of objections from third parties are neutral matters that do not weigh in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

17. The proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole, and there are no material considerations that indicate a decision other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

N Perrins

INSPECTOR