~~DD~~: 27/12

Application No.: ADC/0670/07 Recommendation – Refuse Application

Site: 36 Whitelot Way, Southwick, West Sussex

Proposal: Front Dormers

The Application

The application site contains the southern half of a double storey semi detached pair with brick and pebbled ash elevations and a gable ended clay tile roof, located on the eastern side of Whitelot Way within the built up area of Southwick.

The dwelling has a small side extension and a large garage/storage building located to the rear. The roof space was converted into a master bedroom in 2006 with a dormer window installed in the rear elevation and two velux windows installed in the front elevation.

The site has previously formed the subject of three planning applications involving the construction of dormer windows:

- In July 2005 Council refused the initial roof conversion, unhappy with the inclusion of front dormers which it considered out of keeping with the character of the area and incongruous within the street scene (SW/38/05/TP);
- In December 2005 Council then approved a modified roof conversion that involved the use of velux windows rather than a front dormer (SW/87/05/TP); &
- In February 2007 Council refused a new proposal to expand the roof conversion to include a 3.8m wide flat roofed front dormer (ADC/478/06).

The last application formed the subject of an Appeal to the Planning Inspectorate who dismissed that appeal in October 2007, considering the proposal to conflict with established Council Policy (AH7 of the Local Plan & Development Control Standard No.3), and to be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

This application represents the latest attempt by the applicant to install front dormers in this dwelling, however instead of a one consolidated flat roofed box like dormer (as was included in those previous applications), the application now propose the use of two 1.7m wide pitched styled dormers.

Whitelot Way is described in the Planning Inspectorate's decision letter as a quiet residential street that rises moderately steeply from south to north. It is characterised by mid-20th century two-storey semi-detached dwelling houses, mostly faced with brickwork and painted render. Roofs are generally gabled and plain tiled, and the use of common facing materials throughout the street, coupled with the unbroken roofs stepping up the hill, gives a unity to the whole composition. Except at this site where there are currently two velux windows, there is no visible evidence of any loft conversions having taken place.

Consultations and Representations

Third Parties: As per the last application, two representations have been received from the owners of properties directly opposite the site (No.'s 33 & 35), objecting to the proposal based on the following grounds:

- Impact on the visual amenity and character of the area;
- Impacts on privacy given the narrow width of Whitelot Way;
- Noise nuisance generated by associated building works; &
- Over-development of the site leading to increased parking shortages.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plans 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005):

LOC1, DEV1

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996):

AG1, AH7 & Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Control Standard No. 3 'Extensions & Alterations to Dwellings'

Planning Assessment

Policies

Structure Plan policies seek to protect, and where possible, enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area, requiring high standards of design, layout and construction (DEV1). Policy AH7 of the Local Plan states that extensions and alterations should be designed so as not to result in an unacceptable degree of overlooking, a loss of natural light or an overbearing effect on neighbouring dwellings. They should be of sympathetic design and materials to the original dwelling and the area in general.

The Council's Development Control Standard No.3 states that dormers 'should not be so large that they over-dominate the dwelling' and should allow a large amount of the original roof to be visible. The windows in dormers should be similar in style and proportion to those on the original dwelling. On older-style properties small hipped or gable roofed dormers are usually preferable to flat-roofed dormers. Two small dormers will often be more acceptable than one large one, provided they are sufficient distance apart. In some locations, front dormers may not be acceptable.

Visual Amenity, Character & Appearance

Despite the improved style of the proposed dormers, the Planning Inspector's view of the previous application that a dormer would interrupt the roof plane and appear as an incongruous and visually intrusive element within the street, harmful to the present cohesiveness of the street scene remains true.

Furthermore, whilst the location of the proposed dormers match roughly with window locations directly below, their style bears little relationship to the

fenestration below, whilst the combined bulk of the two dormers and their position close to the ridge, would create a 'top-heavy' appearance to the detriment of the character and appearance of the dwelling and the visual balance of the semi-detached pair.

Residential Amenity

Due to the narrow nature of Whitelot Way, the distance between the proposed dormer windows and the principal windows of dwellings opposite is approximately 19m, below the 22m minimum recommended in Council's development standards. Notwithstanding this deficiency, it is not considered that the front dormers would give rise to any additional overlooking than that already caused by the existing windows on the front elevation. The fact that the dormers are intended as light and air sources to an ensuite (rather than a habitable room) assists in this consideration.

With respect to the other issues raised during the submission period:

- Construction noise is administered by Health Regulations and is therefore not a valid reason for refusing the application; whilst
- The increase in floor space is so minimal that it is unlikely to result in additional inhabitants or parking demand being generated by the proposal.

Recommendation

Refusal for the following reason:-

B5ER (amended)

The proposed dormers are unacceptable in that they do not relate sympathetically to the design of the existing building and would be out of keeping with and detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene and make it difficult, if permitted, for the Local Planning Authority to prevent similar additions to other dwellings, the cumulative impact of which would detract seriously from the visual amenity of the area. ~~It would~~ They therefore conflict with the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH1, DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH7).

Case Officer: ...D. Reynolds... Date: ...29/4/07...