Application Number: ADC/0773/07 Recommendation – REFUSE

Site: 92 Old Fort Road, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5HB

Proposal: Extensions and alterations

The Application

The application site contains a detached two-storey house with a shallow-pitched 'butterfly roof' design and an attached double garage. To the front, is a detached annexe, which in association with the dwelling and garage enclose a small courtyard that serves as a formal entrance to the house.

The property has a large front garden with the building being well setback from the south side of Old Fort Road. To the rear, is a relatively small garden that opens directly onto the beach, almost exclusively taken up by an existing swimming pool.

The original house dates from the early 1960's, with the installation of a sun room, extension of the staff annexe and enclosure of the rear balcony being approved in the early 1970's. In 1980 a further approval was granted to the erection of a front protruding garage extension.

More recently, in November 2007, an application (ADC/0612/07) for major alterations and extensions to the house was refused under delegated powers. It included (as amended):-

- A flat-roofed first-floor front extension (in a cube-like form) over the garage containing additional living space;
- A flat-roofed first-floor front extension (also 'cube-like') partly over the staff annexe and entrance courtyard containing a master bedroom, dressing room and ensuite; and
- The removal of the existing rear spiral staircase and the erection of a masonry frame giving the illusion of tightening the glazed rear elevation into a more cuboid shape to match the front elevation.

As originally submitted, the application had comprised a scheme involving 2 separate first-floor front extensions above the garage and staff annexe. The applicant was advised that these were unacceptable due to concerns about:-

- The length and height of the western first-floor extension over the existing staff annexe;
- Its impact on neighbouring properties, particularly No.90 Old Fort Road, in terms of overbearing impact, loss of outlook and access to daylight for existing windows;
- Impact on the streetscene, particularly the western elevation which extends well in front of No.90 and would therefore be extremely prominent to traffic travelling eastward along Old Fort Road; and

- The extensions being unsympathetic to the existing design and character of the building and the area in general.

The current application is a modified version of the original concept referred to above but with differences including:-

- A continuation of the 'butterfly roof' towards the front of the property over the kitchen, central atrium and link (between the master bedroom and living area), in an attempt to better integrate the extension with the character of the original structure, but with the front part still as a cube-shape;
- Simplification of the treatment of the western flank wall that protrudes well in front of the house on adjoining No.90 Old Fort Road, such that all the windows have been omitted except for triangular shaped high level infill glazing below the new sloping roof;
- The length and height of the flank wall have been reduced largely in line with the previously modified design that was ultimately refused; and
- The 'cubes' of the extensions have been connected at the first floor level (with an enclosed formal entrance to the dwelling underneath).

The house to the east (No.94) has been modified several times including the erection of a long ground floor front extension along the eastern boundary of its site. The house to the west (No.90) is relatively modest and unaltered, with only a very small original front protrusion and is set back farther from the road than either of its adjacent neighbours.

Consultations and Representations

Third Parties: No comments received. [NB. through the applicant, there is a copy of an e-mail from the owner of No.90 that he does not object to the current design on the basis that the simplified flank wall elevation is less likely to limit his own intentions for extending his house in future].

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005) (saved policies): LOC1, CH1, DEV1
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AH7 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Control Standard No.3 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)

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 front extensions should not usually extend significantly beyond the building line or abut side boundaries. In the case of semi-detached or detached dwellings, front extensions will only be allowed where the extension can be successfully assimilated into the street scene and not unduly affect neighbours.

Government policy in PPS1 refers to the commitment to protecting and improving the environment. It states that planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design; and that good design is indivisible from good planning and that design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area, should not be accepted.

Visual amenity

Overall the south side of Old Fort Road provides an eclectic mix of building designs with various types of houses varying in both height and scale. There is little uniformity in the building line with many dwellings having been extended to the front in a piecemeal fashion.

Nevertheless, despite the continuation of the 'butterfly roof' forward over part of the proposed extensions, the overall design involves a contrasting modernist architectural style considered unsympathetic to the character of the existing house and others in the locality.

Furthermore, the extent and manner in which the first-floor extensions are shown projecting towards the road would bring the upper floor of the house well in front of the established first-floor building line for Old Fort Road. The result would be the creation of a west side flank wall that would be extremely prominent rather then blending in with the existing streetscene.

Unlike the previous application which involved the use of windows as well as a mix of building materials and finishes in an attempt to improve the aesthetic appearance of the flank wall, the current design simply utilises a sealed hardwood walnut finish for the overhanging 'cube' at first-floor level, with a rendered finish on the side of the first-floor link between the master bedroom and living area of the dwelling. The result is a design out of context with surrounding development and considered detrimental to the streetscene. It would make it more difficult to resist other development of similar scale and form along Old Fort Road which, cumulatively, would have a greater adverse visual effect.

Residential amenity

The western wing would not meet the 45 degree 'rule of thumb' guide in relation to the angle of view from the windows of the adjacent dwelling No.90 and would have some adverse impact in terms of reduced outlook and

daylight. The extension would also have an overbearing and dominating effect when viewed from the front garden of No.90.

Removal of the glazing (aside from at high level) has resolved any impact relating to the privacy of the neighbouring front garden space.

Amenity space

Despite the increased floorspace, there is no material change to the amount of external amenity space. The size of the rear garden is already below the standard specified in Council's DC Standard but this is offset by the large front garden and the immediate access to the public beach.

Access and parking

The site maintains suitable access and on-site parking provision in the form of the double garage, with a long driveway.

Recommendation

APPROVED (unanimously)

REFUSE for the reason that:-

1. The proposals would be excessively out of keeping in scale, form and design with the existing dwelling and other dwellings in the vicinity and in consequence would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the locality conflict with the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH1, DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AH7).
2. H20R (Detrimental to residential amenities of neighbouring house at No.90, causing an overbearing effect) (amended)

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