Application Number: ADC/0147/08 Recommendation – REFUSE

Site: 'Greenacres', Old Salts Farm Road, Lancing BN15 8JQ

Proposal: Amendment to design of five-bedroom chalet bungalow under construction (resubmission of ADC/0691/07)

The Application

This application is referred to committee at the request of a District Councillor. It is a resubmission of a previous application refused under delegated powers.

The site lies at the north-eastern end of the unmade Old Salts Farm Road, on the south side of the railway, from which it is visible to the public, to the east of North Barn Kennels.
Planning permission was granted in 2002 for the demolition of the existing bungalow and its replacement with a five-bedroom chalet bungalow with integral double garage (L/103/02). The footprint of the replacement dwelling was some 60% more than the building to be removed. While it was considered to be substantially larger in size than the original bungalow, it was considered at the time that the new dwelling would have a limited impact on the surrounding landscape due to its low eaves line.

A subsequent application was granted in 2003 (L/69/03) for amendments to the ridge height, which had been increased by 0.3m, and for other elevational changes. An application for further amendments to the design of the dwelling was submitted in 2007 and refused under delegated powers on 15 February 2008 (ADC/0691/07). The present application is a resubmission of that same proposal without any revisions.

The chalet bungalow as approved has a fully hipped roof with eaves at ground floor level. The west elevation in particular featured a lower ridge and eaves level than the central part of the dwelling. The present proposal is to raise the eaves and ridge to effectively result in a full two-storey house. A dormer originally proposed for the west elevation is to be removed and replaced with two rooflights. The north east corner of the roof has already been raised to a gable from the original hip with a window added under the eaves. The applicant states that these works were previously agreed with officers, although no written confirmation of this exists. The eastern end of the dwelling has been completed.

The result of the works is to raise the height of the two projecting elements on the north elevation to full two-storey height, with half hipped roofs level with the main ridge and with windows introduced at first-floor level.

A balcony has been added on the south elevation with a raised roof in the south west corner as per the north west corner with doors and a Juliet balcony at first floor in place of a window within the eaves. The central dormer on the front (south) elevation has been amended to include a balcony at first floor level.

There is also a permission (ADC/0228/06) to replace the existing small dwelling at nearby North Barn Kennels with a four-bedroom dwelling. An application has just been received to enlarge that proposal to five-bedrooms.

Consultations and Representations

Environment Agency: No objection.

Lancing Parish Council: To be reported.

Third Parties: A letter from the residents of Luther's Lodge states that they consider the amendment to the design will enhance the appearance of the building.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005) (saved policies): LOC2, CH1, CH3, ERA4, DEV1
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AC1, AC4
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' (ODPM 2004)
PPS25 'Planning and Flood Risk' (ODPM 2006) & Circular 04/07

Planning Assessment

Policies

Government policy in PPS7 states that new housing in the countryside must be strictly controlled but is supportive of the replacement of suitably-located buildings with new buildings if they would bring about an environmental improvement in terms of impact on surroundings and the landscape. It states that Core Strategies should lay down the criteria to be applied and clarify the permissible scale of replacement buildings.

In the present case, the site is located within the countryside and within the 'Strategic Gap' separating Lancing from Shoreham-by-Sea.

Structure Plan policy LOC2 states that development in the countryside should not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated to require a countryside location. It also states that, where this criterion is met, priority is to be given to the re-use, adaptation and extension of existing buildings where this is

possible without extensive alteration or reconstruction, before the construction of replacement or new buildings.
CH3 lists 'strategic gaps' of countryside separating built-up areas (including that between Lancing and Shoreham in which the site is located) in order to preserve the separate identity and character of the settlements concerned. It states that any development which would undermine this objective or lead to the actual or perceived coalescence of settlements should not be permitted.
DEV1 requires high quality development of a scale and appearance that integrates with and, if possible, enhances adjoining land uses and which has regard to its context including the landscape and skyline of the surrounding area.

Local Plan policy AG1 states that development outside the built-up area boundary will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and there will be an even stronger presumption against it in strategic gaps and the AONB.
AC1 requires the countryside of the District be protected for its own sake from development which does not need a countryside location.
AC4 states that development within 'strategic gaps' will not normally be permitted, in order to prevent coalescence and retain the separate identities of settlements. It states that only in "compelling circumstances" will development be permitted such as in relation to the essential needs of agriculture, horticulture, forestry or the diversification of the rural economy or to take advantage of a valuable opportunity to meet the need for recreation.

The previous permission related to the replacement of this dwelling with a larger one took account of policy AC10 which allowed for replacement dwellings if they could be accommodated satisfactorily within existing curtilages and have no adverse impact on the landscape. However, this policy has not been 'saved'. In relation to extensions and alterations, it stated that they should respect the existing scale and character of the original dwelling.

Visual amenity

The replacement dwelling as originally approved was not considered to have an unacceptable effect on the landscape or open rural character of the strategic gap as it had a relatively low eaves line and a 'chalet' style appearance.

The works that have already been carried out to the north eastern corner have altered that character and the proposed amendments would further enlarge the bulk and mass of the building, thereby increasing its impact on the landscape.

The previously subsidiary nature of the west side of the building befitted its chalet style. While the overall height of the dwelling will not be exceeded, by raising the eaves and ridge height of this part, the building would become more imposing and significantly less like the bungalow which it replaces. It now goes far beyond the scale and character of the original dwelling.

The property has already substantially increased in size and it is considered that the further increase in the bulk and massing of the building that would arise as a result of these changes is unacceptable, giving rise to a more dominant structure having a greater visual effect on the surrounding landscape. This part of the strategic gap, partly because of the fragmented land holdings, is particularly vulnerable to the cumulative effect of individual developments, as evidenced by other applications, including the latest proposal to further increase the size of the nearby dwelling at North Barn Farm.

The works that have already been carried out to the north east corner are, in the absence of written permission, unlawful but it is considered that they are acceptable in themselves provided the remainder of the dwelling is constructed in accordance with the originally approved plans (i.e. with a lower ridge and eaves line to form a more subservient western wing).

Residential amenity

The nearest dwellings are Luthers Lodge, some 34m to the south, and North Barn Kennels, approximately 50m to the west, which also has permission for a replacement dwelling (ADC/0228/06). The current proposal removes a dormer from the west elevation thus lessening the potential for overlooking North Barn Kennels. The addition of a balcony to the south elevation would face towards Luthers Lodge but the distance is far enough away to avoid unacceptable loss of privacy.

Recommendation

REFUSE for reason that:-

1. The proposed raising of the eaves and ridge to form gable ends would unacceptably increase the bulk and massing of the building to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property and would increase the building's prominence in the landscape, undermining the aims of protecting the integrity of the Strategic Gap, contrary to the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (LOC2, CH3, DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AC1, AC4)

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