Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1393/21 Recommendation – Refuse

Site: 9 Queens Place, Shoreham-By-Sea

Proposal: Proposed rear dormer.

Date of site visit: 27 August 2021

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a terraced house on the west side of Queens Place, within the Shoreham Conservation Area. It is proposed to construct a dormer roof extension to the rear roofslope, measuring 4.1m wide, 2.1m high and 3.4 deep. It will fill most of the roofslope and will be level with the ridge. It is described as being tile hung in the application form.

There are existing box dormers of a similar style at Nos 2, 7, 8, 12 and 23.

A previous application for a dormer at this property was refused in 2018.

Relevant site history

Dormer extensions allowed at No. 7 (AWDM/0800/14) and No.12 (AWDM/1552/15).

Dormer extensions refused at No.31 Queens Place (AWDM/1188/16) and 9 Queens Place (AWDM/0491/18)

Consultations

ADCAG: Approve

Representations

4 objections received from the occupiers of 11 and 14 Queens Place and 6 and 12 Ravens Road:

- The Council has already approved several of these clumsy, insensitive and intrusive constructions with seemingly no regard for the objections of the people actually adversely affected. Most of the residents originally moved to this street because of its charm and friendliness.

- I consider it unwise and irresponsible of the Council to have previously approved those dormers already in place - a view which, I believe, is even shared to some extent by several of the councillors. Developing the roof spaces of these small Victorian terraced cottages into attic

rooms would surely have been sufficient and would impact so much less on neighbours, and the area as a whole.

- Other obvious consequences of approving more of these expansive projects would inevitably be to increase the population density in our street, add to the parking problems, and not least, cause serious disturbance during the construction of these offensive developments.

- We are anxious that the blight does not spread any further along the street.

- The properties in Queens Place are in an attractive conservation area but with very limited parking. Roof extensions have been previously allowed with consequent loss of privacy within the gardens of houses opposite to the extensions. The development at Cecil Norris House is already likely to add to traffic problems in the area and a larger house at No.9 Queens Place could also have this effect. A further extension should be prevented to retain the character of the remaining homes in Queens Place and the privacy of the homes opposite.

- I know that the Planning Office has tended to place considerable value on precedents set within a street or area. In light of that, I must point out that the closest possible precedent for maintaining the objection has been set by yourself. We are dealing with the very same house and the same type of construction. I cannot conceive, in all rationality, what possible arguments could now be brought forward to overturn your previous judgement.

- The houses in Queens Place are narrow, and not especially tall. The placing of such large and looming dormers on their roofs radically disrupts their design. Dormer window structures, historically, could exist reasonably comfortably on roofs provided they were of traditional design and materials, and, above all, provided they occupied only a small proportion of the whole roof area. An outstanding nastiness of the structures I object to is that they take over the entirety of the roofs concerned, thereby fundamentally changing the shape and design of the buildings. They present aggressive angles, top-heavy weighting of the roof lines and far too much dark colouring to the line of sight.

- The proposed development would overlook my garden and my home, resulting in a significant loss of privacy and the total destruction of the character of the building.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 15, 17
'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Management Standard No.2 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings''
Shoreham by Sea Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Strategy (ADC 2008)
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The proposal comprises upgrading the existing housing stock located within the built up area and can be supported in principle. The relevant issues are the effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers and the effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling and its surroundings.

Visual amenity and impact on Conservation Area

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out how Government policies are applied when determining applications involving designated Heritage Assets (Conservation Areas included).

Paragraph 134 states: "*Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design*."

Paragraph 197 states:

"*In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

Paragraph 202 states: "*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*"

Policy 17 of the Adur Local Plan states that:

"*Development in Conservation Areas will be required to be of a high standard of design and materials so as to respect, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of that area*."

The proposed dormer would physically and visually dominate the rear roof slope. Its basic box form and shape would appear ungainly, leaving little of the original roof still visible. Its size would be excessive, appearing out of scale with the host building. The window in the dormer would not be of a similar style or proportion to the original dwelling. The materials to be used would not be sympathetic to the host dwelling, being grey tiles.

Its design would be contrary to the explicit advice set out in the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance titled Development Management Standard No. 2 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'.

At paragraph 3.11 this guidance states ‘dormers should not be so large that they over-dominate the dwelling, resulting in a top heavy ‘box-like’ appearance … and should not project as far as the walls of the house. A large amount of the original roof should still be clearly visible.’

The guidance goes on to state that ‘where the existing roof space is of inadequate size to accommodate the room(s) proposed without adding very large flat-roof dormers, permission will not normally be granted.’

Further, at paragraph 3.14 it is stated ‘roof extensions should respect the scale, character and appearance of existing dwellings.’

The proposal does not therefore comply with the Council’s guidance which sets out the principles for achieving a design of an appropriate standard, especially in areas of particular townscape quality including Conservation Areas.

It is acknowledged that other dormers have been permitted elsewhere in the street, some relatively recently, including at Nos. 7 and 12. At the time there were considered to be sufficient reasons to grant permission. However, it has become clear that cumulatively such additions are unsightly and have a significantly detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the terrace as a whole and on the setting of the Conservation Area, views of which are possible from the west in Ravens Road. They are obtrusive features and appear out of scale and character with the rest of the terrace.

Consequently, while permission has been granted in the past for such roof extensions, it is considered that unacceptable visual harm has been caused and it would not be appropriate to grant further permissions for equally damaging roof extensions that will exacerbate the existing harm.

The current proposal, while slightly smaller than the previous refused scheme, is still of a poor design standard which fails to successfully integrate itself to the host dwelling and the terrace to which it belongs and, in consequence, fails the statutory test of new development in a Conservation Area by failing to preserve its character or appearance. Permission should be refused.

Residential amenity

The neighbours principally impacted upon by this development are those either side and at the rear (it is physically removed from the remainder).

There is a separation distance between the dormer and the neighbouring rear buildings of more than 50m. The dormer would be situated above eaves height and would sit alongside the existing dormer at No.8. While large and unsightly, it is not considered that it would result in adverse overbearing impact or overshadowing.

Gardens and habitable space of these neighbours already experience mutual overlooking from the first floor windows of the application property, so the severity of overlooking would not be materially worse than at present and intrusive and unacceptable loss of privacy would not result.

Recommendation

REFUSE for the following reason:

The proposed rear dormer, by reason of its excessive size and poorly integrated basic box form and shape, would over-dominate the roof resulting in a top heavy 'box-like' appearance to the detriment of the scale, shape and form of the host dwelling and the terrace to which it belongs, and the cumulative impact of such roof extensions would fail to preserve the character or appearance of this part of the Shoreham Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies 15 and 17 of the Adur Local Plan, 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising: Development Management Standard No.2 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'' and the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern with the proposal and determining the application within a timely manner, clearly setting out the reason(s) for refusal, allowing the Applicant the opportunity to consider the harm caused and whether or not it can be remedied by a revision to the proposal.

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 6 September 2021

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 6 September 2021