The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 August 2017

by N A Holdsworth MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date:22/08/17

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3805/D/17/3173931
56 Mill Lane, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 5NA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr D Ramirez against the decision of Adur District Council.
- The application Ref AWDM/0165/17, dated 2 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2017.
- The development proposed is two storey side extension, side dormer roof extension, alterations to rear fenestration, demolition and erection of new bay window to front elevation.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Character and Appearance

2. The appeal building is part of a group of principally detached dwellings of various styles set along Mill Lane. As the result of its simple duo pitch roof and prominent front gable wall it appears as a complete composition when viewed from the street. Whilst the property is not subject to any particular designation or protection, it is nonetheless an attractive building that makes a positive contribution to the street-scene.

3. The proposed development includes a two storey side extension above the existing garage, which would be capped with an extension to the side of the roof that reaches almost to the full height of the building. On the northern elevation a dormer would be added with a pitched roof, principally to provide space for an internal staircase to provide access to the enlarged second floor living accommodation.

4. The two side additions to the roof would be of differing bulk, scale and mass to each other. They would therefore appear as asymmetric additions to the roof of the appeal building. As a consequence of their scale they would diminish the prominence of the simple duo pitch roof form of the existing building, creating multiple roof features that lack a coherent, unifying design concept. When

viewed from the street, the cumulative effect of both extensions would be to create a secondary ridge line that runs horizontally across the centre of the building. This would consequently detract from the significance of the front gable wall in how the building is appreciated in views along the street.

5. As such the proposed extensions would harm the character and appearance of the existing building and, in consequence, the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. In coming to this view I have noted the alterations to other buildings referred to by the appellant in the surrounding area. I found that none of these are directly comparable to the circumstances of the proposed development, given the distinctive appearance of the appeal building. Furthermore, neither reference to the diversity of building styles evident in the surrounding area nor the use of sympathetic materials in the construction of the proposed extensions would justify or mitigate the harm that would arise from this development. Whilst the trees to the front of the building may afford some screening, the development would still be clearly visible from the public realm.

6. I have also had regard to the advice in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings' (1996) (SPG). The appellant contends that the development complies with the guidance on side extensions set out in this document. However, I note that the SPG also emphasises that extensions should be in keeping with the appearance, scale, design and character of both the existing dwelling and the street-scene generally. For the reasons set out in this decision, I find that the proposed side extension on this occasion fails in this regard.

7. The appellant states that the dormer on the northern elevation could be built under permitted development rules. However, it is clearly proposed as part of a broader series of building operations necessary to, amongst other things, provide additional living space in the roof which is facilitated by other parts of the proposed development. Therefore the likelihood of this dormer window being built independently of the appeal proposal is low, and accordingly I attach little weight to this as a fallback.

8. I have also considered the appellant's view that the proposal would enable a programme of building works to take place that would improve the appearance of the property. However, the benefits of any cosmetic enhancement to the front elevation of the building would not outweigh the harm caused by extensions that are unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would conflict with saved Policy AH7 of the Adur District Local Plan (adopted 1996) (ADLP) and the relevant parts of the SPG on extensions and alterations to dwellings which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that extensions to residential buildings are sympathetic to the design of the original dwelling and the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

Other Matters

10. The Council also express concern that the proposed two-storey extension to the southern elevation would be detrimental to existing neighbouring residential amenities. However, no detailed explanation has been provided by the Council as to how the development would result in an adverse effect on the living

conditions of the occupants of neighbouring residential buildings, in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight. Whilst I agree that the development would be prominent in the street-scene, it would not result in harm to living conditions as such.

11. The proposal would remove an existing first floor bay window on the side elevation that currently overlooks the neighbouring property, and replace it with a blank wall. Whilst in this specific regard the proposed development would result in an improvement to the living conditions of the occupant of the neighbouring property at no. 54, this would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

12. I note that the proposed dormer window would face an equivalent window in number 58 Mill Lane, and the use of obscure glass could mitigate any potential loss of privacy that may arise from its location.. However, given that I have found that this part of the development is unacceptable for other reasons, this would not make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms.

Conclusion

13. I have found that the appeal proposal would not harm the living conditions of surrounding residents. However, it would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR