Application Number: ADC/0477/08 Recommendation - REFUSE

Site: **Riverside Cottage, Steyning Road**
Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5FH

Proposal: **Two-storey extension and single-storey attached garage (revised resubmission of ADC/0177/08)**

The Application

Riverside Cottage is an L-shaped detached cottage, beside the Southern Water pumping station, in an isolated position at the foot of Mill Hill, on the east side of the valley floor. It lies to the north east of the A27 Adur fly-over and intersection. It is accessed via a long track off the A283 Steyning Road. There are no other dwellings in the vicinity.

The cottage has a steep tree-covered bank immediately behind the property. It has no garden as such. It is finished in a mixture of flint and render with a tiled roof.
It is proposed to construct a large two-storey extension, 12.5m by 5.6m, at the rear (east) of the cottage, plus a single garage, 7.6m by 3.3m, attached to the north side. The extension would provide a sittingroom, study and utility room on the ground floor and 3 additional bedrooms on the first floor (amounting to 5 bedrooms in total).

The application follows the refusal of an application in May 2008 for a similar proposal but which included a further 2 bedrooms in the roof space (ADC/0177/08). The application was refused on the following ground:-

> *"The proposed extension, by reason of its large size and unsympathetic design, would be out of keeping in scale and appearance with the existing building and would detract to an unacceptable extent from the visual amenities of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and thereby conflict with the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH2, DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AC2, AH7)"*

Works have partly commenced on site with the digging out of foundations. Part of the steep bank at the rear has been cut back and an area of hardstanding has been formed at the side of the cottage. These works are unauthorised.

Consultations and Representations

South Downs Joint Committee: The planning officer for the SDJC reiterates their objection on grounds that the extension would very significantly increase the bulk of the dwelling and would completely change its character from a modest cottage to a very substantial house. He comments that the current application is similar to the previous proposal, but with the ridgeline of the new element reduced to that of the existing buildings and bedrooms within the roofspace removed. Whilst this results in a more pleasing appearance than the previous scheme, and also reduction of the increase in size, he believes that it still represents a more than doubling of the existing cottage's floorspace and would still completely change its character from a modest cottage to a very substantial house.

Third Parties: No comments received.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005) (saved policies): LOC2, CH2, DEV1
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AC1, AC2, AC3, AH7 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No.3 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM 2005)
PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas'

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the area proposed to become a National Park. Structure Plan policy CH2 requires all development within AONBs to be compatible with or enhance the distinctive character and quality of the landscape. DEV1 seeks to protect, and where possible, enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area, requiring high standards of design, layout and construction.
Policy AC2 of the Adur District Local Plan states that only in compelling circumstances will development be permitted in the part of the AONB within Adur, and that any development that would be harmful to the visual quality and distinctive characteristics of the AONB will not be permitted. Where circumstances are regarded as compelling, development needs to be of a particularly high standard of design, must be in keeping with the character of the locality and sited so as to minimise visual intrusion and noise disturbance. AC3 requires development to have regard, among others, to the AONB's characteristic sculptured landform and appearance.

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 Supplementary Planning Guidance on residential extensions states that "the most important basic principle is that any extension should be in keeping with the appearance, scale, design and character of both the existing dwelling and street scene generally."

Visual amenity and character

The proposed extension has a substantial footprint (70 square metres) and form which, together with the garage (25sqm) will wrap around and subsume the existing cottage (59sqm). The scale of the extension fails to respect the existing building, resulting in it completely overdominating the original cottage. The modest L-shaped traditional character of the existing two-bedroom cottage will be lost and replaced with a large five-bedroom house which will appear as a more substantial built form. The proposed extension can in no way be said to be sympathetic or subsidiary to the original dwelling.

The latest proposal no longer includes accommodation within the roofspace and the ridge height no longer exceeds that of the original cottage. However, in floorspace terms, the proposal still represents in excess of a 120% increase, and continues to result in a much more substantial building. The proposal therefore fails to comply with policy AH7 of the

Adur District Local Plan as it would not be sympathetic to the original dwelling in terms of its appearance, scale, design and character.

The dwelling is in an isolated position and it is noted that it can only be glimpsed from the Shoreham flyover. Its visual impact is not therefore currently significant in the wider landscape. However, the considerable bulk of the proposed extension would make the building more noticeable in the landscape and, with the associated works to excavate the bank behind the property, the enlarged dwelling will have a greater impact on the visual quality and special character of the AONB.

Recommendation

REFUSE on ground that:-

1. The proposed extension, by reason of its large size, unsympathetic proportions and design, would be out of keeping in scale and appearance with the existing cottage and would thereby detract from the landscape quality and special character of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, conflicting with the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH2, DEV1) and the Adur District Local Plan (AC2-3, AH7)

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