



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2013

by David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT

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

Decision date: 11 January 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/C3810/D/12/2187319

Sandgate House, South Strand, East Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN16 1PN

- 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 Simon Watts and Mrs Julie Thom against the decision of Arun District Council.
 - The application Ref EP/70/12 was refused by notice dated 17 October 2012.
 - The development proposed is alterations and first floor extension to the existing house, providing a reduced garden room on the ground floor, together with the conversion of the garage to a gym and on the first floor two new bedrooms, study and bathroom. Removal of the existing pitched roof and replacement with lower mono pitched roof.
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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 area.

Reasons

3. The existing bungalow, which has rendered elevations and a hipped pantile roof, sits on the sea front in an area of mixed residential development. There is no one particular architectural style in the area but the two properties to the west are bungalows that are set back further from the beach than the appeal property and to the east lies a two storey dwelling. Although there are a small number of flat-roofed elements in buildings nearby, the overall characteristic is one of pitched and tiled roofs. Vehicular access to the site is gained via South Strand to the north but the property is most visually significant in views from the beach to the south. The existing dwelling sits comfortably within the overall character of the beach side development, although in terms of views from the beach, it does sit forward from the immediately adjacent properties known as Lar-Chess and Casa Blanca.
4. The proposal would replace the pitched roof with a monopitch roof and provide first floor accommodation over part of the south west corner of the property. The overall design would accurately be described as contemporary and there is no objection in principle to this approach. Indeed the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that architectural styles or particular tastes should not be imposed and innovation should not be stifled. However, it is also important that new development is of a high standard of design which adds to the overall

quality of the area. This approach is reflected in saved policies GEN7 and DEV19 of the Arun District Local Plan (LP) which promote the need for extensions to respect and enhance local distinctiveness and not have an overbearing effect on neighbouring properties.

5. The Council expects buildings to be well designed, especially on sensitive sites which are visible from public places and I consider that the appeal site could accurately be described as sensitive. This description is re-enforced by the contents of the East Preston Village Design Statement which seeks to protect views from the beach and limit the impact of building work on neighbouring properties. Although the document is not part of the Development Plan (and therefore I can only afford it limited weight) it nevertheless establishes principles that I consider are appropriate to take into account.
6. There is some planting around the appeal site but the first floor element of the proposed development would nevertheless be visually prominent, both from the beach and from the main garden areas of Lar-Chess and Spindrifft. Although in other circumstances the use of timber cladding, the appearance of the fenestration and the form of the roof (including the large overhangs) may be appropriate, in this setting they would combine to present a dwelling that would appear incongruous and overly dominant.
7. The appellant suggests that despite the provision of a new first floor, the removal of the existing pitched roof would reduce the bulk of the building. However, within the context that it sits I do not consider the appearance of the existing bungalow to be unduly bulky or out-of-place and the increase in height of the property to two storeys, albeit only on the western side, would introduce a 'new' element of built form that because of its design would add to the bulk of the property.
8. The Design and Access Statement refers to the provision of obscure glazing in the western elevation and I note that one of the Council's suggested conditions would require obscured glass to be used at first floor level in that elevation. This would result in obscure glass being used in the window to the proposed study and in most of the main window to bedroom 5, which I consider would be to the detriment of the living conditions of the occupiers. Although this is not a matter on which my decision turns it adds weight to my overall conclusion. Reference is also made by the appellant to two other schemes that have been granted planning approval but I have been given no details of those proposals and can therefore give them little weight.
9. I have taken into account the fact that the proposed development would result in an improvement to the overall energy efficiency of the dwelling and that good quality materials would be used but these factors do not outweigh my conclusion on the main issue which is that the proposed alterations and extension, because of their design, would not sit comfortably within the existing rhythm of development as seen primarily from the beach. The requirements of LP saved policies GEN7 and DEV19, which seek a high quality of design which responds to and does not compromise the characteristics of the area, would not be met and therefore the appeal should be dismissed.

David Hogger

Inspector