
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2017

by Kevin Gleeson BA MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9th November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P1425/D/17/3183512

33 The Forges, Ringmer BN8 5FA

- 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 Mrs Helen Ellwood against the decision of Lewes District Council.
 - The application Ref LW/17/0540, dated 22 June 2017, was refused by notice dated 1 August 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as loft conversion with Velux windows to front and rear roof slopes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appellant pointed out that express planning permission would not normally be required for the insertion of rooflights as it would be permitted development. In this case a condition attached to the planning permission authorising the housing development removed permitted development rights. The appellant also indicated that it was arguable whether those rights should have been removed but as they were, and a planning application was made and refused, I shall deal with the appeal before me.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached dwelling within a cul-de-sac which is characterised by a range of modern house types. There is no common building line and no. 33 is set forward of its neighbours. It has a steeply pitched roof front to back and a projecting two storey front gable.
 5. The proposal is to convert the loft space to provide an additional bedroom with the introduction of three rooflights to the rear roofslope and two to the front roofslope.
 6. Within The Forges there is a general absence of rooflights on the front roofslopes of properties although some properties within The Forges and the neighbouring Craig Meadows have modest dormer windows as part of the original building. Small rooflights and solar panels can be found on the rear
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roofslopes of some buildings. Because of the layout of the development these features are visible from the public realm although they appear in the context of other elements of the roofscape.

7. In spite of being set forward of its neighbours, no. 33 is not particularly prominent when entering The Forges and the projecting gable also serves to limit views of the main roof although it can be seen from other locations within the cul-de-sac.
8. Planning permission was previously granted and remains extant for a loft conversion which would have the same number and size of rear rooflights as the appeal scheme but with smaller ones in the front roofslope. The proposed rooflights would be of a similar height to those previously approved but wider.
9. The front rooflights would be larger than those on the limited number of properties within the development which have rooflights on the front roofslope. In my view they would be materially larger than the front rooflights already permitted and together, they would appear visually prominent when viewed in the context of the windows at first floor level and would therefore be harmful to the appearance of the host property. They would also be uncharacteristic of development within The Forges and Craig Meadows and would be at odds with the existing rhythm of development and therefore detrimental to its character.
10. Consequently the proposal would be contrary to Policy ST3 of the Lewes District Local Plan, 2003 which requires development to respect the overall character and rhythm of neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. It would also fail to accord with Policy CP11 of the Joint Core Strategy, 2016 which seeks to secure high quality design through ensuring that development respects the character and distinctiveness of the district.
11. Furthermore, the proposal would not be in line with Policy 9.1 of the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan which requires new development to be of a high quality and designed to fit in with its surroundings, taking account of the design and detailing of adjacent buildings. It would also fail to reflect the requirement for good design set out in section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

12. I have taken account of the fact that Ringmer Parish Council have not objected to the proposed development, there have been no objections from neighbouring occupiers and no concerns regarding overlooking have been raised. I have also had regard to the fact that the proposed rooflights would allow a greater amount of light and improved ventilation to the loft room than the approved scheme. However, I have determined the appeal on the basis of its own merits and these matters do not lead me to a different overall conclusion.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Kevin Gleeson

INSPECTOR