

App.No: 150213 (HHH)	Decision Due Date: 5 August 2015	Ward: Ratton
Officer: Jane Sabin	Site visit date: 9 April 2014	Type: Householder
Site Notice(s) Expiry date: 23 March 2015		
Neighbour Con Expiry: 17 July 2015		
Press Notice(s): N/A		
Over 8/13 week reason: Deferred for negotiation		
Location: Tudor Lodge, 14 Ratton Drive, Eastbourne		
Proposal: Two storey extension at side to form annexe and single storey extension at rear.		
Applicant:	Mr C Smith	
Recommendation:	Approve	

Executive summary:

The proposed development, whilst ill-conceived and harmful to the character and appearance of the host building, would have the benefit significant screening from the public realm. As such it is considered, on balance, that the scheme is supportable.

Planning Status:

Residential
Area of High Townscape Value

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework

Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan Policies 2013

B2: Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods
C12: Ratton & Willingdon Village Neighbourhood Policy
D10: Historic Environment
D10A: Design

Eastbourne Borough Plan Saved Policies 2007

UHT1: Design of New Development
UHT2: Height of Buildings
UHT4: Visual Amenity
UHT5: Protecting Walls/Landscape Features
UHT16: Protection of Areas of High Townscape Value
HO20: Residential Amenity

Site Description:

The application property comprises a large, detached two storey dwelling in the Arts and Crafts style, occupying a generous plot with large gardens to the front and rear in an elevated position on the north side of Ratton Drive. The front elevation is largely unaltered save for a modest side extension and a large array of solar panels on the front roof slope.

This part of Ratton Drive is designated as an Area of High Townscape Value, due to the quality of the design of the properties, characterised by Arts & Crafts detailing and the use of vernacular materials, together with the quality of the public realm found in the width of the streets, generous grass verges, mature vegetation and large plots with significant gaps between the buildings.

Relevant Planning History:

EB/1983/0016

Single storey extension at side
Approved 15 February 1983

EB/1995/0471

Erection of conservatory at rear.
Approved 8 November 1995

Proposed development:

Permission is sought to erect a two storey extension on the west side of the property, and a single storey extension to the rear towards the east side.

The two storey element would measure 5.2m wide and 10.3m deep (10.7m into the double height bay), under a hipped and pitched roof 8.5m high to the ridge. The extension would follow the rear building line of the dwelling, but would sit forward of the front corner of the property by 3m. The extension would provide an annexe, with a sitting room, shower room and study (shown as a kitchen on an earlier plan) on the ground floor, and two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor, accessed from a staircase centrally located within the annexe. The annexe would be accessed either via a door located off the existing lounge or a rear door leading to the garden, however there would be no through access at first floor level.

The single storey extension would measure 6m wide and 4.25m deep, under a concealed flat roof with an overall height of 3.4m, and would provide an extended kitchen area.

Both additions are proposed to be constructed in matching materials, including black painted weatherboarding at first floor level, which is a particular feature of the property.

Consultations:Internal:

The Specialist Advisor (Conservation) objects to the application, noting that the property is in the Arts & Crafts style reflective of the character that makes a positive contribution to the immediate and wider Area of High Townscape Value. Aesthetically it is defined by the use of vernacular detailing and materials, mostly unaltered, elevated and set back from Ratton Drive, accessed via a formal drive way, which together with No 16 allows for glimpsed views of the, distinct roofscape, chimney stacks and materials through the

mature vegetation on the front boundary, the character of which makes a positive contribution to the immediate and wider area.

The two storey extension sited on the west projects forward of the existing building line (front elevation), resulting in an incongruous footprint when balanced against the plan form associated with the pattern of development which addresses Ratton Drive. It is acknowledged that due to the topography of the area and siting of No 16 (to the west) the forward projection of the extension does not project past the building line of the neighbouring property. However in considering the design intent of the original layout, which makes a contribution to the character of the area, a rear projecting extension would be more sympathetic to the overall urban fabric and the setting of nos. 14 and 16, which does allow glimpsed views of the distinct roofscape of No 14, which in turn contributes to the immediate and wider area. In considering the scale and mass of the proposal, in terms of height this is equivalent to the principal dwelling, whilst the two small windows centrally located on the extensions west elevation provide little relief to the overall mass. In addition, the integrity of the chimney stack, in relation to the interpretation of the intended Arts & Crafts style of Tudor Lodge is eroded by the proposed roofscape.

A side extension is not unacceptable, however in this instance the scale and siting does result in an uncomfortable addition, when balanced against the intended urban pattern of Ratton Drive, whilst the mass and scale undermine those characteristics which make a positive contribution to the Arts and Crafts style associated with the immediate area.

It is recommended the extension is moved back, so it does not project past the built line of the principal building and the roof junction between the principal building and extension reduced or reconfigured to better reveal the chimney stack as a feature. In addition the massing of the west elevation of the extension is given some form of relief; this could be achieved by reconfiguring the internal arrangement and providing an enclosed projecting stairwell on that elevation.

External:

Neighbour Representations:

Three objections have been received and cover the following points:

- Negative impact on the character and appearance of the area, particularly detrimental to the spacing between buildings
- Overdevelopment
- Loss of more trees than stated
- Mass, size and scale of the extension is too large
- Loss of light and privacy
- Overshadowing
- Intrusive overlooking of the front and rear gardens of 16 Ratton Drive, and overpowering impact of a large blank wall so close to the boundary, also resulting in loss of light to the side windows and terrace (the black colour of the timber cladding would exacerbate this). Use of bay windows will lead to direct loss of privacy to the whole of the front garden and the first floor bedroom window; rear facing window will also overlook the rear garden at close proximity. No.16 gained consent for a granny annexe in 2013, but this only single storey to avoid impact on neighbours and the wider area
- Extending forward by 3m would set a precedent for others, resulting in the loss of the existing "staggering" in line with the sweep of the road

- The substitution of the kitchen by a study does nothing to address any of the concerns raised by residents and officers, and there is nothing to prevent the a kitchen being reinstated following an approval, or to use it as a second home
- A more modest proposal on a single storey basis should be more than ample when attached to an already substantial property
- Loss of on-site parking/increase in street parking
- Visual impact of, potentially, more/re-sited solar panels

Appraisal:

The main issues to take into account in determining this application are the impacts on residential and visual amenity, and specifically the designated Area of High Townscape Value.

Residential amenity:

The single storey rear extension adjacent to 12 Ratton Drive would no impact on the amenities of the occupiers of that property, given the distance and extent of screening and vegetation between them. No objection has been received in this respect.

The two storey extension would have the most impact on adjoining residents. Although there are strong objections from a resident to the rear in Walnut Tree Walk, it is not considered that the objections in respect of light, overshadowing and loss of privacy could be sustained, given that the application site has a rear garden depth of 35m and the objectors property has a rear garden 27m deep, notwithstanding the significant raised ground level of 14 Ratton Drive.

The property most affected would be 16 Ratton Drive, immediately to the west of the extension. The extension would sit approximately 1.5m from the common boundary, 2.75m beyond the rear no.16 and 0.5m behind the front building line. The projection beyond the rear of no.16 would not have any impact on the windows of habitable rooms, and it is considered that this would also be the case for the windows at the front of the dwelling, as even looking out from the side facet of the bay would not permit views into windows. There are four windows at first floor level on the flank elevation of no.16, but these all appear to be secondary windows to the front and rear bedrooms; whilst the amount of light to these windows would be affected, they are not principal windows and it is not considered that this would amount to a substantive reason for refusal. Turning to the overlooking of the front garden, it is acknowledged that the bay at first floor level would increase the view of no.16's front garden to a degree that would not be insignificant, as it would be 6m closer to the boundary than existing windows. Most front gardens are completely within the public domain, however this is not the case in this section of Ratton Drive, where the gardens are not only significantly elevated but well screened by hedges with some trees. A flush window would improve this situation somewhat.

Visual amenity:

The design of the existing dwelling is of a high standard and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Area of High Townscape Value. The front elevation has, as its main focus in architectural terms, a slim weather boarded gable with an arched window rising from a tiled roof over a narrow single storey projection on the east side, which provides an elegant feature due to its proportions. This is balanced by a double height bay on the west side. The proposed extension, with

a significant width (a little under half the width again of the original dwelling), its forward projection of 3m, repetition of the double height bay, and hipped roof 1.5m higher than the existing gable, would completely dominate the elegance of the original, well designed frontage, and would result in an incongruous feature that would not sit comfortably the existing building. Large extensions, particularly two storey extensions would normally be expected to be subservient to the original dwelling; the current proposal does completely the opposite, but without the proportions and grace of the existing building. It would therefore be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Area of High Townscape Value.

Negotiations to reduce the impact of the extension whilst providing the same number of rooms with the same degree of separation (i.e. as an annexe) have been suggested. This included setting the extension back to the front building line, dropping the ridge height and relocating the large central staircase, which also enabled more of the existing chimney stack to remain visible. The applicant has declined to make any changes, other than to re-label the kitchen as a study on a resubmitted floor plan. The applicant has cited an annexe at 8 Ratton Drive as being comparable, however whilst this is of a similar design, no part of it extends forward of the original dwelling. The adjacent property at 16 Ratton Drive has an extant permission for an annexe, but this is single storey and is set back, albeit by a small amount. The dwelling is already large (it currently has five double bedrooms) and whilst there is no objection in principle to a side extension, no justification has been made to outweigh the harm resulting from such a large addition, which is out of proportion with the original building.

The roofscape of an area is important to its overall character, and is of particular importance in conservation areas (where there are no permitted development rights to alter roofs) and Areas of High Townscape Value. It is therefore essential to give very careful consideration to alterations above ground floor level, and which have an impact on the roofscape. It is the case that there is a good degree of screening along the front boundary which may act as a foil to development behind it, although the trees are a mix containing deciduous specimens which only provide screening at some times of the year.

Impacts on trees:

The submitted plan indicates one small tree for removal, and it is likely that two more would be affected; however none of these trees are worthy of protection, and only one, a conifer, is visible from outside the site.

Human Rights Implications:

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

Conclusion:

The proposed development, whilst ill-conceived and harmful to the character and appearance of the host building, would have the benefit significant screening from the public realm, and it is therefore very much on balance that the scheme is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Approve, subject to conditions

Conditions:

1. Commencement within three years
2. Development in accordance with submitted plans
3. Submission of samples of materials
4. Restriction of hours (building works)

Appeal:

Should the applicant appeal the decision the appropriate course of action to be followed, taking into account the criteria set by the Planning Inspectorate, is considered to be **written representations.**