



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2016

by C Jack BSc(Hons) MA MA MRTPI

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

Decision date : 28 June 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/16/3148028

62 Woodfields, Chipstead, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2RB

- 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 and Mrs N and N Clark against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref SE/15/03457/HOUSE, dated 3 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 6 January 2016.
 - The development proposed is first floor and single storey front extension.
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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, including the adjacent Chipstead Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. 62 Woodfields (No. 62) is a modest bungalow located on the corner of Woodfields and Chipstead Lane, thereby essentially 'fronting' both roads. This is an attractive area characterised mainly by individually designed detached properties that are set back from the road. There is a fairly spacious feel with clear separation between properties, enhanced by established gardens and trees. This provides a pleasant setting to the Chipstead Conservation Area (CCA), on the opposite side of Chipstead Lane.
4. No. 62 is currently unassuming in the street scene. However, its materials and very close relationship to the neighbouring property, Nettles, make it something of an exception to the prevailing character, particularly from Chipstead Lane. The proposed extensions would markedly alter the height, scale and character of No. 62, resulting in a much more prominent building.
5. The resulting dwelling would be substantial for the comparatively limited depth of the site. This is reflected in some uncomfortable elements of the proposed design. In particular the roof profile, with its differing pitches and eaves heights, would sit awkwardly adjacent to Nettles, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the street scene and the setting of the CCA. The single storey extension would project forward of the front elevations of Nettles and its neighbour Sandholme, towards Chipstead Lane. While this would be less prominent than the first floor extension, it would nevertheless be uncharacteristic as a 'front' elevation in terms of its design and forward projection.

6. I have had regard to the Sevenoaks District Council Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2009 (SPD), which provides guidance on high quality design, including for corner plots. The proposed development is inconsistent with the SPD in that it does not respond sensitively to the character of Woodfields or Chipstead Lane in terms of scale, form, architectural features and spaces around buildings. The single storey extension also does not respond sensitively to the adjacent 'building line' on Chipstead Lane.
7. I therefore conclude that the design, scale, form and bulk of the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It therefore conflicts with Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Council Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015 (DMP), which seeks high quality design that responds to local character in scale, height, materials and site coverage.
8. In light of my reasoning above, I further conclude that the proposed development would harm the setting of the CCA, contrary to the expectations of the Framework and Policy EN4 of the DMP, which seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas and their settings. However, I would quantify the extent of this harm as being less than substantial when considered in the context of Paragraphs 133 and 134 of the Framework. Such harm needs to be balanced against any public benefits the development might bring, and I consider these below.

Other Matters

9. The appellants have set out the proposed use of materials more sympathetic to the surroundings than those existing at No. 62. Materials could have been addressed by condition, had the appeal been allowed. However, this does not alter my findings above, which were focused on the scale, position and design of the development.
10. I understand the appellants' desire to create a family home in the local community. However, personal circumstances seldom outweigh general planning considerations and do not outweigh the harm that I have identified in this case.
11. The provision of enlarged residential accommodation can be considered a minor benefit and can therefore be afforded a small degree of weight in favour of the proposed development. However, this benefit is significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm the development would cause to the character and appearance of the area and to the setting of the CCA, a designated heritage asset.
12. I have considered the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupiers of No. 61 Woodfields, primarily in relation to privacy. Due to the separation between the appeal site and that property, located on the opposite side of the road, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on the living conditions experienced there.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

C Jack

INSPECTOR