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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

**by P W Clark MA MRTPI MCMI**

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

**Decision date: 24 November 2016**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/16/3155612**

**41 Caxton Close, Hartley, Longfield, Kent DA3 7DG**

- 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 N Caesar against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
  - The application Ref SE/16/01465/HOUSE, dated 11 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 July 2016.
  - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Reasons

2. The sole main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. This is an estate of moderately sized houses mostly arranged in terraces (although the appeal site is one of a semi-detached pair). Much of the estate is artfully arranged along the contours of a north-facing hillside. Odd angles appear in plot boundaries as the alignments of the layout adjust to the contours but the houses themselves are uncompromisingly rectangular. Staggered setbacks rather than curved or wedge-shaped plans are used to align the terraces to the contour lines.
  3. The characteristic rectangularity of the estate is respected in most of the few extensions which exist, for example, nearby at numbers 17 and 67 Caxton Close. By contrast the front half of the appeal proposal would have a wedge-shaped plan, abutting the angled side boundary of the plot and so, would be uncharacteristic.
  4. The layout of the area produces many potentially picturesque effects but in places an exposed blank gable end makes a disappointing contribution to the street scene. The existing appeal property is a notable example, prominently placed in an elevated position at the end of a cul-de-sac section of Caxton Close. The proposed advanced, slightly extended, angled flank wall of the extension with its prominent waste pipes would exacerbate this effect and so would harm, rather than improve, the street scene.
  5. It would fail to take the advice of paragraphs 4.10, 4.11 and 4.40 of the Council's Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document adopted in May 2009. The first of these advises that it is possible for an extension to be larger than the original dwelling where this would enhance the townscape by, for example, providing a new, well-designed landmark feature or increasing the
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visual attractiveness to an otherwise unexceptional street scene. Paragraph 4.40 advises that a side extension at a street corner should not be left with a blank wall but should include windows. This will allow informal overlooking of the street which can help to deter crime and also breaks up the appearance of a solid mass. Instead of providing a well-composed elevation to terminate the view up to the appeal site, the proposal would enlarge the existing blank gable end, bring it forward and add a few less attractive features of its own.

6. Paragraph 4.11 advises that where visible from public view, roof shape is critical to creating a successful built form. It is a characteristic of the area that gable ended roofs are universal on the skyline (an effect not compromised by the addition in a few cases of hipped roofs to existing flat-roofed porches at ground-floor level). By contrast, the rear projection of the proposal would include a hipped roof and so would compromise the common design feature of the area.
7. The appellant's concern is that a much narrower extension would be of little benefit but I am not convinced that a reconsideration of the configuration of the internal staircase to reduce the space taken would not allow for a staggered plan form accommodating most of the functionality sought whilst respecting the rectangular characteristics of the estate.
8. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with parts (a) (b) and (h) of policy EN1 of the Council's Allocations and Development Management Plan DPD adopted on 17 February 2015. These require the form of a proposed development to respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area, to respect the character of the site and surrounding area and to incorporate features to deter crime, fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

*P. W. Clark*

Inspector