
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2017

by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 02 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/16/3166138
12 Downs View Road, Maidstone ME14 2JD

- 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 Ms Natalie Marsh against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/506876/FULL, dated 9 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is a 1.5 storey rear extension, loft conversion to create master bedroom/bathroom suite, dormer window to principle elevation and internal alterations.
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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 appeal site is located within a mainly residential area. Downs View Road has semi-detached bungalows in a very similar style with features such as hipped roofs, and a bay window on the front elevation. There is a strong sense of rhythm to the roofscape and this is a key characteristic of the street scene. The road is steeply sloping and along the upper parts of the slope the properties, including the appeal building, are highly visible in the street scene.
 4. The appeal site has a planning history which includes an approved planning application for alterations to the dwelling. The approved scheme incorporates rooflights. The scheme before me would involve the construction of a dormer on the front elevation of the roof. I have been referred to the Council's Residential Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2009. Section 4 amongst other things sets out that loft extensions should not detract from characteristic roof profiles.
 5. The proposed dormer would be a large feature on the front elevation of the dwelling. It would be tall and constructed across the majority of the width of the roof. It would be a prominent feature which would draw the eye towards the bungalow. Due to its size and bulk the addition of the dormer would disrupt the appearance of the bungalows and break up the clear pattern of the roof scape.
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6. I accept that there are some front dormers in the area, and I note that the design of the dormer matches these. The dormers that can be found in the area are on Downs Close and the north part of Downs View Road. However, the majority of these are located at the bottom of the slope or on a side road and the dwellings do not have the same prominence as No 12 Downs View Road. There is a front dormer on a similar property to the south. However, this is a very small and located towards the ridge of the roof and the chimney. I have also been referred to an approved planning application on Downs Close which includes two pitched roof dormers on the front of the property. I do not have the full details of the circumstances that led to this being accepted or if the other examples have planning permission, and so cannot be sure they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. In any event, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
7. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be in conflict with Saved Policy H18 of the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000. This amongst other things seeks extensions and alterations which will complement the streetscene and character of the area. It would also be contrary to emerging policies DM1 and DM8 of the submission Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2016. These amongst other things seek new development that fits unobtrusively with the existing building where retained and responds positively to and where possible enhances, the local character of the area. It would be contrary to the SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of the need for high quality design.

Other matters

8. The Council does not raise any objections in terms of the other elements of the scheme or its effect on the living conditions of neighbours. Based on the information before me, I see no reason to disagree with this. However, these matters are not sufficient reason to outweigh the harm I have found.

Conclusion

9. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Gibbons

INSPECTOR