

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 May 2017

by Joanna Reid BA(Hons) BArch(Hons) RIBA

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

Decision date: 22 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/W/17/3168149

Cafe at the Grove, The Grove, Swanley BR8 8AJ

- 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 Sukru Ahmet against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref SE/16/03570/FUL, dated 18 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is new mansard roof to facilitate storage (B8).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effect that the proposal would have on: the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and highway safety in the nearby streets and estate roads.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site includes an almost flat-roofed single storey café, which is located in The Grove by the entrance to The Grove Industrial Estate. The immediate area includes industrial development in The Grove and Park Road, and mainly 2-storey dwellings in Sheridan Close. Most nearby industrial buildings have low-pitched profiled sheet roofs. Most nearby dwellings have steeper-pitched tiled main roofs and flat-roofed garages.
4. The proposed mansard would roughly double the height and bulk of the existing long narrow low-key café. Due to its substantial bulk, height and mainly tiled form, the double-pitched and gabled mansard with its dormers would have an incongruous top-heavy appearance. Because of its largely open siting in The Grove, and its height and form, the enlarged café building would look harmfully prominent and incongruous. Thus, the proposed mansard would harm the character and appearance of the existing building and it would be unacceptably out of keeping with local character.
5. The floor area and volume of the mansard would substantially exceed the reasonable storage requirements of the café so that would not be sufficient reason to allow this harmful scheme.

6. Therefore, I consider that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policy SP1 of the *Sevenoaks District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy* and Policy EN1 of the *Sevenoaks District Council Allocations and Development Management Plan* (DMP) which seek high quality design and respect for local character, and the *National Planning Policy Framework* which aims to always seek to secure high quality design and to take account of the character of different areas.

Highway safety

7. The appeal site broadly reflects the footprint of the existing café. So, there would be no space within the site for on-site parking for vehicles associated with the use of the Class B8 first floor space in the mansard, and no other parking proposals have been put to me. Instead, vehicles would be likely to park as close as possible to the café in The Grove or Park Road, both of which are fairly narrow and where the Council says that parking is already under pressure. Having regard to the scale and number of industrial units that are reached by those roads, additional parked vehicles in them would be likely to partly block, and thus disrupt, pedestrian and vehicular traffic using those routes, including the access to and egress from The Grove Industrial Estate. Thus, off-site parking associated with the scheme would be likely to contribute to hazardous conditions in the nearby highways and estate roads that, in turn, would be likely to endanger highway safety in them. Whilst there is a public car park in Park Road, which is some distance away, its characteristics are unsuitable for larger delivery vehicles and, in any case, it is not within the control of the appellant.
8. Thus, the proposal would be likely to endanger highway safety in the nearby streets and estate roads. It would be contrary to DMP Policy T1 which aims for development to mitigate its travel impact and DMP Policy T2 which seeks appropriate parking provision.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal fails.

Joanna Reid

INSPECTOR