
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2017

by Timothy C King BA(Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/17/3172605

16 The Butts, Otford, TN14 5PR

- 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 Alun Williams against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref SE/16/03912/HOUSE, dated 20 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is front dormer addition to existing roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The Butts is a pleasant, tree-lined residential street largely typified by semi-detached dwellings set back from the footway behind generous front gardens. At my site visit I noted that many of the street's dwellings are characteristically gable-ended with sharply pitched, expansive roofs and strong building lines. The appeal property is a case in point.
4. The proposal would involve the installation of a narrow, dormer-type window within the front roof-plane. It would be set down from the dwelling's ridgeline. Unfortunately, the dormer would be positioned off-centre and the proposed window within, although of a similar profile to the dwelling's existing windows below, would not provide cohesion with the general fenestration arrangement.
5. I consider that the proposed extension, due particularly to its elongated form and positioning, would represent an obtrusive form of development, upsetting the visual balance of the dwelling's front façade. A flat-roofed arrangement would not ameliorate in this regard as the roof extension's visual prominence would not be tempered. Such an awkward and incongruous addition would affect the integrity of the dwelling's design and would be contrary to the guidance provided by the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Residential Extensions' (SPD) which, in reinforcing local policy aims, advises that such development should respond positively to existing features of the building and its surroundings.

6. In more general terms Policy SP1 of the Council's Core Strategy (CS) requires that all new development should respond to distinctive local character, and this is reflected in the aims of Policy EN1 of the Council's Allocations and Development Management Plan (DMP). Roof extensions facing the street are not a characteristic of the area. This further reinforces my conclusions as to the proposal's visual impact.
7. The appellant, although unspecific as to their location, would appear to suggest that other local residential extensions in the area should weigh in favour of the proposal. Whilst I witnessed some such development towards the junction of The Butts and Bubblestone Road this does not outweigh the harm that I have identified would result from the development proposed. Given the harm I have found the lack of any neighbour objection cannot make the development acceptable.
8. The appellant, in support of his case, also refers to additional roofspace allowable as permitted development. However, such allowance does not permit dormer extensions to front roofplanes. Neither do I consider that the suggested failure of the case officer to make contact with the appellant during the application stage can have any bearing on the planning merits, or otherwise, of the case in hand.
9. I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of both the host dwelling and its surrounding area, materially conflicting with the design objectives of CS Policy SP1, DMP Policy EN1 and also relevant advice within the SPD.
10. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all matters raised, the appeal does not succeed.

Timothy C King

INSPECTOR