

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2017

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/17/3176193

Eleanor, Rushetts Road, West Kngsdown, Sevenoaks, TN15 6EY

- 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 Mary and Fred Jeffreys against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref SE/17/00099/HOUSE, dated 11 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as new first floor to be created by raising existing roofline with new roof and floor structure to suit, installing new staircase, creating 2 new bedrooms and family bathroom in roof space incorporating the dormers. New entrance lobby to ground floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed scheme on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene.

Reasons

3. Rushetts Road is characterised by a diverse mix of bungalows, dormer bungalows and chalet style dwellings, which occupy varied size plots and front onto a narrow road flanked by wide grass verges. Many of the dwellings are partially screened from the street scene by boundary hedges, which together with the soft planting within the front gardens and wide grass verges contribute to the informal and spacious character and appearance of the road.
 4. A number of the dwellings have been extended and there is a diverse range of pitched and flat roofed dormer extensions on the front, side and rear elevations of some of the dwellings. The flat roofed dormers typically sit lower within the roof slope of the host dwellings and as a result do not dominate the roofs or appear top heavy. Conversely some of the side facing dormer extensions with pitched roofs project up to or close to the ridge line of the host dwellings. They tend to dominate the roofs of the dwellings concerned. These existing dormer extensions highlight the need to assess each proposal on its individual merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies.
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5. Together the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Council Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP), seek high quality in the design of all development. It should respond to local character and history, respect the character of the site and its surroundings and add to the quality of the area. The Councils Residential Extensions – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has the same objectives.
6. The Appeal property comprises a narrow, shallow pitched bungalow, which occupies a long and narrow plot and which is partially screened from the street scene by boundary planting. Immediately to the west is a wide bungalow with taller and more steeply pitched hipped roof, with flat roofed wings on either side. To the east is a pair of bungalows, similarly with taller and more steeply pitched roofs.
7. With the proposal both the height and pitch of the roof would be increased and this element of the scheme would respect and compliment the character of the host building and Russetts Road as a whole. The proposed rear facing dormer would be set in from the rear eaves line of the dwelling and would closely follow the contours of the rear facing roof slope. It would be seen as a continuation of the ridge line of the dwelling. As a consequence the rear facing dormer addition would respect the overall character of the dwelling.
8. Conversely the roofs of the proposed side facing dormer additions would project close to and would be at right angles to the ridge line of the host dwelling. The roofs of the dormer additions would be both gabled and project out from the north/south ridge line by more than three metres each. As a consequence they would appear top heavy and would detract from the shallow pitched and hipped lines of the sides of the host dwelling.
9. Due to its combined high eaves height, narrow width, use of Cedar cladding and resulting strong vertical appearance the proposed two storey front addition would be totally at odds with the traditional appearance, low eaves height and uncluttered lines of the host dwelling.
10. It is noted that there is a central two storey extension on a bungalow opposite the Appeal site. However one side of that extension follows the roofs slope on one side, resulting in a wider, asymmetrical extension which respects and blends in appropriately with the host dwelling. As such that extension is not directly comparable to the proposed front extension.
11. As a result of these factors the proposed resultant dwelling would appear visually awkward and unbalanced. The harm it would cause to both the character and appearance of the host building and the street scene would outweigh the benefits for the Appellant that would result from the proposed additional accommodation. It is not a matter that could be satisfactorily dealt with by the imposition of any conditions.
12. I therefore conclude on the main issue that the proposal would materially and unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene. It would therefore conflict with policy EN1 of the ADMP, the SPD and the NPPF.

Other matters

13. Whilst not included as a reason for refusal the Council has expressed concern that the side facing first floor bedroom would have an unsatisfactory outlook and would conflict with policy EN2 of the ADMP and the SPD. Together they seek to ensure that satisfactory living conditions are provided for existing and future residents.
14. The window that would serve the proposed side facing first floor bedroom would have obscure glass up to a height of 1.7 metres above the internal floor level. Above that would be clear glazed top opening windows which would provide a limited outlook towards the sky. At the same time this window would have a favourable west facing aspect and would receive good levels of daylight and sunlight.
15. This is not ideal, however the overall the dwelling benefits from generous sized rooms, together with open and spacious outlooks from its main habitable rooms and two large double bedrooms. As a consequence the living conditions provided in the resultant dwelling would be good and would accord with policy EN2 of the ADMP.
16. The proposed rear facing first floor window would serve an open landing area and would be set away from the boundaries with the adjacent dwellings. The side facing first floor windows would be obscure glazed to a height of 1.7 metres above the internal floor level. Whilst the roof of the resultant dwelling would be higher, it would remain lower than many of the dwellings in Rushetts Road and would be hipped away from the boundaries of the dwellings on either side.
17. Although the resultant dwelling would project beyond the rear building line of the property to the west, it is noted that the eastern part of that dwelling comprises a garage rather than habitable accommodation.
18. Finally, the proposed Juliet balcony on the front elevation of the extension would be separated from the dwellings opposite by Rushetts Road and the generous sized front gardens on either side of the road.
19. As a result of these factors the proposed scheme would not result in a material loss of outlook, daylight, sunlight or privacy for the occupiers of the adjacent or nearby dwellings. The relationship between the Appeal dwelling and neighbouring dwellings would be typical of the locality.

Conclusion

20. Whilst I have found in favour of the Appellant on some matters the conclusion on the main issue represents a compelling reason for dismissing this Appeal.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR

