
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2019

by S Dean MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M2270/D/19/3229232

Meadow Lodge, Talbot Road, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook, Kent TN18 4LT

- 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 A French against the decision of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00038/FULL, dated 3 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing attached garage and erection of a two-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appeal site lies within the designated High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB). The Council note that the property lies within the limits of built development and that due to the form and location of the proposal, the character and natural beauty of the AONB would not be affected. I agree with this position.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street-scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal site and its immediate surroundings feature a variety of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. In views along Talbot Road this variety is evident, as are the gaps between the houses. I consider that these gaps in the street-scene are important to the character and appearance of the area.
5. These generally respect the house-to-boundary gaps that the Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2006 (the SPD) seeks to protect, even where they appear to pre-date it.
6. The extension to Cockshott Cottages has reduced the gap to the appeal site. Notwithstanding the actual distances, that extension and its relationship to the boundary is consistent with the aims of the SPD and the development plan. The gap between the properties, and in particular the gap to the boundary is maintained and any terracing effect is reduced.

7. The proposed two-storey extension to the site boundary would substantially close the gap between the appeal site and the adjacent terrace, particularly in longer views along Talbot Road. It would also close the gap as seen from Highgate Hill (the A226) to the rear. I find therefore that it would cause an unacceptable terracing effect, harmful to the character and appearance of the street-scene. This harm would not be not mitigated by the otherwise unobtrusive and subservient nature of the proposal in terms of its height, materials and relationship to the requirements of the SPD.
8. As a result, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with saved Policy EN1 of the adopted Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006, Core Strategy Policies 4, 5 and 14 of the adopted Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Development Core Strategy 2010, the Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2006 and the National Planning Policy Framework. All of these seek to ensure good design which respects the character, appearance and context of an area, with particular regard to the pattern of buildings and the spaces between them.

Other Matters

9. I note that there is extant permission for an extension to the appeal property. However, that is not before me, and my consideration must focus on the appeal scheme.
10. I have found that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the street-scene. Previous approvals, the relatively unobtrusive and subservient nature of the proposal and the personal circumstances of the appellant do not change my conclusions on the main issue.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Dean

INSPECTOR