



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 September 2019

by Neil Smith BA Hons BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/19/3232573

48 Well Road, Otford TN14 5PT

- 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 James Patrick against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00149/HOUSE, dated 16 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is for the installation of three (3) new roof-lights to the front and south-west side elevations and on the flat roof, amendments on the dormer to the rear elevation and new chimney to the south-east elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I saw from my site visit that roof lights, a chimney and a dormer window to the rear have been constructed. However, I cannot be certain that the additions reflect the plans that were considered by the Council at planning application stage. For the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the plans before me.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property accommodates a two-storey detached dwelling which has a hipped roof. It is set back from the street allowing a driveway to the front. It is a rectangular shaped plot and the dwelling occupies almost its full width with garden area to the rear. Similar sized detached dwellings sit on either side.
5. The appeal proposal has three elements; a rear dormer, roof lights to the side and rear elevations and a new chimney to the side elevation. It is the rear dormer that formed the basis of the Council's reason for refusal.
6. The rear dormer would be constructed to the same height as the ridge of the roof and extend to the full width where it would meet the hips. The rear elevation of the dormer would line through with the rear elevation of the main dwelling and would be visible from the gardens of the adjacent properties. The proposal would be unacceptably disproportionate to the scale of the existing

roof and harmful to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the area by reason of its excessive size and bulk in a street scene where I saw no dormers of comparable scale or form within the immediate surroundings of the appeal site.

7. Whilst the Juliette windows would be similar in design to the windows on the ground floor, they would be significantly at odds with those at the first floor which would result in an unbalanced appearance due to their excessive height and width.
8. The Council did not oppose the proposed rooflights or chimney, and on the evidence before me, I have no reason to reach a different conclusion in these respects.
9. However, given my findings on the rear dormer, I conclude that the proposal, overall, would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and the existing dwelling. There would be conflict with Policy SP1 of Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy (2011); Policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015); the Sevenoaks Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2009) and the Otford Village Design Statement (2015) which, amongst other things, require all new development to be designed to a high quality and to respond to and respect the character of the area.

Other matters

10. The appellant has drawn my attention to other developments in the area at Riverhead, Chiddingstone Hoath, and Otford. The proposals in each circumstance are likely to have been different and, in any event, the fact that similar developments have been granted planning permissions is not, on its own, a reason to allow unacceptable development.
11. I recognise that the neighbours have raised objections regarding overshadowing and overlooking. Whilst I have concluded that the dormer has an unacceptable size and bulk, I find that the proposal does not lead to any unacceptable overshadowing as it does not project further than the existing rear elevation. Overlooking would be no greater than currently exists from the existing rear windows and is acceptable in this regard. However, a lack of harm in this respect would be a neutral factor weighing neither for nor against the proposal.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Smith

INSPECTOR