



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 November 2019

by Neil Smith BA Hons BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/19/3236982

14 Braeside Avenue, Sevenoaks TN13 2JJ

- 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 S Ainsworth against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01820/HOUSE, dated 19 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of loft space including hip to gable changes to roof, first floor front extension to allow for stairs to loft and rear dormer to loft.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site accommodates a two-storey detached dwelling that occupies virtually the full width of the plot. It has a hipped roof and there are a pair of slender chimneys on one of the side elevations. The dwellings along this part of Braeside Avenue are also detached dwellings, are of a similar design and age and have hipped roofs with chimneys. The prevalence of hipped roofs with slender chimneys gives the street scene a strong sense of rhythm and uniformity.
4. The appeal proposal comprises three elements, a first-floor extension to the front; a rear dormer window, and alterations to the roof from a hip to gable ends. It is the alterations to the roof from a hip to gable ends that formed the basis of the Council's reason for refusal. I note that the Council did not oppose the rear dormer window or the first-floor extension to the front and on the evidence before me, I have no reason to reach a different conclusion in these respects.
5. The Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment - Supplementary Planning Document (CAASPD) (2012), states that repeated designs, building scale and spacing are strong unifying features contributing to a cohesive and distinctive streetscape. Further guidance contained in the Sevenoaks Residential Extensions - Supplementary Planning Document (RESPD) (2009) states that where there is a clear consistent line or distinctive roof form that

- face the street, loft extensions should not detract from the characteristic roof profile.
6. The proposed alterations to the roof would change the appearance of the dwelling considerably when viewed from the street. The introduction of gable ends adjacent to the hipped roofs of the neighbouring properties would be out of character and would have a harmful impact on the street scene by virtue of the significant increase in its scale and form. Consequently, the roof would appear as over-dominant and out of character in the street scene.
 7. Whilst the appellant states that the ridge height and the eaves height would remain the same, this would not overcome the harmful effect of the increased size and bulk of the roof. The appellant also argues that there is diversity of styles in the vicinity of the appeal property and that there is no singular style along the street. Whilst there are some variations, I did not observe any dwellings in the vicinity with gable ends of the size and scale of the appeal proposal, nor were any specific examples brought to my attention.
 8. The appellant also argues that there are a number of side dormer extensions in the locality. I saw that some of these other schemes do not follow the design approach specified in the SPD and they do not provide a basis for justifying similar proposals, which would equally fail to adopt good design principles. I also do not agree with the appellant that the Council misinterpreted Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy (2011) (CS), Policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) (ADMP) and the RESPD.
 9. I note that the proposal would be built with the same materials to the existing dwelling. The appellant has also stated that Sevenoaks Town Council recommended the application for approval. Taken together however, I do not consider that these matters provide justification for overcoming the harm identified.
 10. The appellant has stated that the roof extension would be classed as permitted development. However, there is little definitive evidence before as to what may or may not be formally determined to be permitted development in this instance, and I have therefore considered the proposal as submitted to the Council.
 11. Concluding on this issue, the appeal proposal would be an incongruous form of development that would jar with the adjoining properties and be at odds with the street scene. Consequently, the proposal conflicts with Policy SP1 of the CS, Policy EN1 of the ADMP and the CAASPD and the RESPD which require, amongst other things, all new development to be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated.

Conclusions

12. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Neil Smith

INSPECTOR