



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 September 2020

by S M Holden BSc(Hons) MSc CEng MICE CTPP FCIHT MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/W/20/3253533

25 High Street, Edenbridge TN8 5AB

- 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 Adriano De Vito of Rondanini UK Ltd against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00335/FUL, dated 5 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is construction of two-storey side and rear extensions forming new upper floors, with new flat created within the proposed first floor accommodation and construction of new second floor mansard roof structure over existing building forming an additional two flats over. Flat entrance and bin stores are proposed on the ground floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of two-storey side and rear extensions forming new upper floors, with new flat created within the proposed first floor accommodation. Construction of new second floor mansard roof structure over existing building forming an additional two flats over and removal of one chimney at 25 High Street, Edenbridge TN8 5AB in accordance with the application Ref 20/00335/FUL, dated 5 February 2020, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Procedural Matter

2. Notwithstanding the description of the development set out on the application form and the banner heading above, I have used the description on the appeal form and Council's decision notice in my formal decision for the sake of clarity.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Edenbridge Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. No 25 is a detached building in a prominent corner position at the junction of the High Street with Croft Lane. It is in the Edenbridge Conservation Area, and I therefore have a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that Area.
5. The significance of the Area derives from the town's long history. The straight road running through the centre dates from Roman times and is flanked by a cluster of listed and other important buildings that survive along its length. No 25 is towards the northern end of this long, rather narrow Area. It is one of

several buildings that contributed to the expansion of the commercial centre of the High Street in the inter-war years and is evidence of the continuing evolution of the Conservation Area. No 25 is Neo-Georgian in style and makes a positive contribution to the Area arising from the symmetry of its architectural detailing and use of traditional materials on the elevations facing the High Street and Croft Lane. The existing roof is partially hidden by the parapet wall on these front and side elevations.

6. The proposal would replace the roof with a taller mansard addition which would replicate the width and depth of the existing one. In dismissing an earlier scheme¹, the Inspector found the proposed increase in the height of the roof acceptable in principle due to the varying heights of buildings in the Conservation Area. However, he found it to be harmful due to its width, bulk and lack respect for the symmetry of the existing building. The current scheme has addressed his concerns as the roof would be symmetrical, and the proposed fenestration would align with the first-floor windows. Furthermore, although the roof alterations would add bulk to the building, the additional mass would be predominantly to the rear of the High Street and would be partially obscured by the parapet wall and screened by trees in the vicinity.
7. The 2-storey elements of No 25 currently have an L-shaped footprint. In addition, there are single-storey extensions which are tucked to the rear and are barely visible from the surrounding area. The proposal would noticeably increase the bulk of the building by adding a floor to the single-storey element and a 2-storey side extension facing Croft Lane. However, much of this addition would not be seen from the street. In any event the size and bulk of the side extension and its set back from the Croft Lane elevation would ensure that it would appear subservient to the original building. The first-floor windows would mirror the existing ones. Although the doors on the ground floor would not completely align with the windows, the brick detailing would assist with their integration into the elevation as a whole. The set back would ensure that they do not compete with the larger, distinctive, curved top windows on the remainder of the ground floor elevation facing Croft Lane.
8. The gap between No 25 and Croft House, a modern two-storey dwelling, currently provides views of the narrow rear elevation of the existing building giving an appreciation of the elegant proportions of the L-shaped part of the building. However, the gap is otherwise an awkward underused piece of land that does not make a positive contribution to the Area's character. The proposal would significantly erode this gap and views of the existing rear elevation would be lost. However, as the gap is only apparent in oblique views from the High Street across the car park in front of Cedar Mews and it does not provide important views from the High Street or Croft Lane, I consider the effect of the 2-storey extension in this location would be acceptable.
9. Taking all these factors into consideration, I conclude that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Edenbridge Conservation Area. The proposal therefore complies with Policies SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy and Policies EN1 and EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan. These policies seek to conserve the District's heritage assets having regard to the historic and architectural significance of the asset and its prominence and setting.

¹ APP/G2245/W/19/3232445

Conditions

10. The Council suggested a series of conditions in the event that the appeal was allowed. I have considered these in the light of the tests for conditions set out in paragraph 55 of the Framework and imposed them where I consider them necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
11. In addition to the standard time limit a condition specifying the plans is needed to provide certainty. A materials condition is necessary to preserve the appearance of the Conservation Area. Obscure glazing in some of the windows is justified to protect the privacy of adjoining occupiers. Secure cycle parking is shown on the plans, but a condition is needed to ensure that these facilities are retained in perpetuity to encourage cycle use. In addition, the officer's report referred to the need to restrict construction working hours to avoid harm to neighbours and I consider this to be justified.

Conclusion

12. I have concluded that the proposal complies with the development plan. The appeal is therefore allowed, subject to conditions.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans: 18010-001, 18010-006 Rev A, 18010-007 Rev B, 18010-008, 18010-009 Rev C and 18010-10 Rev C.
- 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be those set out in the materials section of the application form.
- 4) Demolition and construction work, including deliveries, shall only take place between 0800-1800, Monday to Friday, 0800-1300 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Public Holidays.
- 5) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the first and second floor windows in the north-western facing elevation of the building have been fitted with obscure glazing (privacy level/grade 3 or higher) and no part of those windows that is less than 1.7m above the floor of the room in which it is installed shall be capable of being opened. The windows shall be retained as installed thereafter.
- 6) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the secure cycle parking shown on Drawing No 18010-006 Rev A has been provided in accordance with details that have previously been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle parking shall be retained solely for its intended purpose thereafter.

End of Schedule