

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 19 January 2021 by Emma Worby BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by Sarah Housden BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/20/3261588

37 Oaklands Close, West Kingsdown, TN15 6EA

- 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 D Campion against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02094/HOUSE, dated 18 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is the part demolition of existing garage and erection of detached double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeals Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. The appellant has submitted an additional drawing Reference CD1804 – A4 showing an alternative boundary treatment on the common boundary with No 36 Oaklands Close (No 36) as part of this appeal. As the amended plan would result in lesser development, the Council and interested parties would not be prejudiced by my acceptance of this plan. Therefore I have taken it into account in my determination of the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, having particular regard to the effect on the Oaklands Close street scene.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal property is a detached chalet bungalow style dwelling, set back from the road with a single storey attached garage to the side of the dwelling. The surrounding area is residential in nature, largely comprised of bungalows and other chalet style dwellings which are generally set back from the road behind front gardens, creating a spacious character and appearance. The appeal site contributes to this character. There is a separate block of garages located to the west of the appeal site. The proposal would involve the partial demolition of the existing garage, leaving the outer wall remaining to form a boundary wall and the erection of a detached double garage located to the front of the main dwelling.

6. Due to the siting of the proposed garage, to the front of the appeal site and forward of the appeal dwelling, it would be highly visible when viewed from Oaklands Close. The combination of its floor area and height would result in a bulky and dominant appearance and although the wide frontage of the site could accommodate the building, it would result in the loss of the spacious and open character to the front of the dwelling, which currently has a positive impact on the Oaklands Close streetscene. Therefore, although a garage may be a common feature within a residential setting with similar examples found in the wider West Kingsdown area, due to its bulk, height and forward position the proposed garage would appear as a dominant and intrusive addition to the site and to the Oaklands Close streetscene, where detached garages to the front of dwellings are less common.
7. The proposed garage would be set back from the front boundary of the site which would leave some space for landscaping. The existing trees to the west of the site, adjacent to the row of garages, would help to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed garage when approaching from the west. However, from the opposite direction, due to the height and bulk of the building, planting would be likely to have a limited impact on mitigating its visual impact and it would be unduly dominant within the streetscene.
8. The remaining wall of the demolished garage would adjoin the existing timber fence to the front of the property, as it does at present and would ensure privacy between the appeal site and No 36. However, due to its height it would appear as a somewhat unusual and incongruous boundary treatment, albeit with a limited impact on the streetscene due to its location to the side of the dwelling. As an alternative, the appellant has suggested the removal of the wall and the imposition of a condition requiring the details of the boundary treatment to be submitted and approved by the Council. Had the appeal been allowed, this would have provided a satisfactory way to deal with the matter but it does not outweigh my conclusion in relation to the main issue in this case.
9. The proposed garage would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, having particular regard to the harm that would be caused to the spacious character of the Oaklands Close streetscene. It would therefore conflict with Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) which requires high quality design and development with a layout which would respect the character of the site and the surrounding area.
10. The Sevenoaks Residential Extension Supplementary Planning Document (2009) (SPD) states that particular care will be taken where garages are set in front of a building in view of the likely greater impact on the streetscene, and in this case I have found that due to its scale and position, the garage would appear unduly dominant in the streetscene. It would not, therefore, accord with the advice in the SPD. The proposal would also conflict with the general design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework that new development should add to the overall quality of an area.

Other Matters

11. It is noted that the existing garage may well be too narrow to fit a modern day car and that a new garage is required for secure parking. However, this would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area.

12. The Parish Council and adjoining occupier at No 36 have made a number of comments on the proposed development, some of which have been addressed above. Had the appeal been allowed, it would have been necessary to deal with the other points in more detail but as it is being dismissed for other reasons, I make no further comments on those matters.

Conclusions and Recommendation

13. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Emma Worby

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Sarah Housden

INSPECTOR