

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 June 2021

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 August 2021.

Appeal Reference: APP/G2245/D/20/3263352

Land at 19 Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HJ

- 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 T Lynch against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application (reference 20/02279/HOUSE, dated 9 August 2020) was refused by notice dated 22 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a "Loft conversion to include second floor dormer to rear elevation".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in an established residential area of Sevenoaks, which has an irregular street pattern. A larger and more open site, an Army Cadet Centre, is located on part of the western frontage of Argyle Road but, for the most part, the area is characterised by residential development, closely built up as terraces of houses on sloping land. The location is within the Granville Road and Eardley Road Conservation Area.
4. Number 19 Argyle Road is part of a short terrace of modest nineteenth century houses, constructed of brickwork or rendered brickwork, with pitched roofs. The terrace is restrained in style, contributing to the harmonious character and appearance of the Conservation Area within which it is set.
5. Number 19 Argyle Road is a two-storey house of rendered brickwork with a slate roof and it is now proposed that it should be extended by adapting the roof structure and creating a tile-hung rectangular dormer construction on the rear slopes of the roof.
6. Provisions in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 impose obligations on those considering whether to grant planning permission

to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas affected by development proposals.

7. The statutory requirements are reinforced by the 'National Planning Policy Framework' (specifically at Section 16), which also emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, which includes providing good standards of accommodation. At the same time, of course, the NPPF acknowledges that modern design can have a role to play in creating a contemporary townscape. In respect of the design considerations that are relevant to this appeal, the very recent changes that have been made to the 'National Planning Policy Framework' do not fundamentally alter the approach to be taken.
8. Attention is also drawn to policies in the Development Plan, notably Policies EN1 and EN4 of the 'Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan' (adopted in February 2015), which underpin the primary legislation in relation to conservation areas generally and which also lay emphasis on design considerations.
9. The Council's 'Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document' (dating from 2009) is also relevant, though it does not have the same force as Policies in the Development Plan.
10. The proposed rear dormer structure would have a major impact on the shape of the original roof and would greatly change the appearance of the existing building. The new form would be bulky and alien to the traditional form of construction which characterises this terrace and other buildings in the vicinity and which generates the essential character of the Conservation Area, since the pitched roofs are typical of the townscape.
11. Moreover, because of the sloping nature of the land in this part of Sevenoaks, and the irregular street pattern, the rear slopes of roofs of houses facing Argyle Road are clearly visible in views along Victoria Road, to the rear, as well as in private views. Indeed, some incongruous modern roof extension work is already very apparent.
12. It can be acknowledged that an extension at the rear of number 19 would be less obvious than alterations to the roofs of houses further along the terrace, nearer to the junction with Victoria Road, since it would be viewed at an angle behind a frontage building. Nevertheless, it would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene and the intrusive effect might be repeated on other buildings in a way that would even more seriously damage the quality of the surroundings.
13. Hence, the proposed development would cause real harm to the character and appearance of the existing building and its surroundings in the Conservation Area, contrary to local and national planning policies, including the Development Plan.
14. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed development would make a

useful addition to the existing house. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the objections that I have identified clearly outweigh the benefits of the project and that this appeal must fail. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR