

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/H2265/D/21/3268322

15 Annett's Hall, Borough Green, Sevenoaks TN15 8DY

- 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 R Perry against the decision of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.
 - The application (reference TM/20/02688/FL, dated 25 November 2020) was refused by notice dated 18 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as follows: "*The proposal involves the demolition of the existing rear extension and the current side garage. These will be replaced with the construction of a 6m single and double storey rear extension. The garage will be re-installed on a similar footprint while the volume on top will be expanded to create a plant room under the new side roof*".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations and extensions to the existing house, at 15 Annett's Hall, Borough Green, Sevenoaks TN15 8DY, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference TM/20/02688/FL, dated 25 November 2020), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Preliminary points

2. Notwithstanding the description of the application that was given in the application form, the nature of the proposal can more clearly and succinctly be expressed as alterations and extensions to the existing house.

Main issue

3. 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

4. Annett's Hall is located within an extensive residential area in the northern part of Borough Green. The roads in the area are laid out in an irregular, meandering pattern in a suburban environment. The houses are detached or semi-detached, with good sized gardens, which provide a sense of space, especially where houses are set back behind deeper front gardens.

5. There is a variety of house types in the locality, often in groups of similar houses that follow the same basic design. Some of these are two-storey houses, while others have the form of bungalows or chalet bungalows (with first floor accommodation largely within their pitched roof construction). Many have been extended or adapted over the years, giving rise to a more interesting and varied streetscene.
6. Number 15 Annett's Hall is one of a group that were originally constructed as detached chalet bungalows, towards the bottom of a sloping section of road, in the north-eastern part of the layout. It has a relatively deep front garden, with a good-sized back garden that contains a large domestic outbuilding in a modern style.
7. Like others, the house itself is in the form of a detached chalet bungalow, constructed primarily with external walls that were previously finished in a sandy coloured render and some low level brickwork (as can be seen at the rear), under a large, pitched roof. The roof has gables to the front and rear, with a clad feature at each apex, and the building has a raised eaves at ground floor level to increase the accommodation within the roof at first floor level. A garage is attached to the west elevation of the building, occupying the space between the house and its side boundary.
8. It is now proposed to demolish the garage and part of the rear of the house, and to construct a new two-storey extension at the side and rear of the main part of the original building.
9. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF) 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 NPPF do not fundamentally alter the approach to be taken.
10. An emphasis on the importance of good design is also to be found in the Development Plan, notably at Policy CP24 of the 'Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy' (which was adopted by the Council in September 2007). This points out the need for new buildings to "respect the site and its surroundings". Similarly, saved policy P4/12 from the Council's 'Compendium of Saved Policies' (dated April 2010), which is specifically concerned with extensions to residential properties, draws attention to the need to consider the form, scale, design and materials of proposed development in the context of the existing building and the wider streetscene.
11. The proposed new extensions would retain the basic form of the main part of the existing front elevation in the finished building. The large gable would be maintained, with lower level brickwork and a decorative triangle at the apex. The existing small garage would be removed and a new side extension would be constructed, however. This would be larger than the existing garage but the front part of the extension would be topped by a pitched roof, in the new

- materials that are proposed for the main roof. It would be set back from the front of the house and would be below the main ridge line. Thus, the side extension would be clearly subservient in views from the highway and would be in harmony with the host building and its neighbours.
12. By contrast, there would be a more significant change at the rear of the building. The main ridge, from front to back of the property, would be extended back into the garden, adding to the overall size of the house, while the new side extension would also continue towards the rear of the building. On the rear elevation, the upper part of this side element would be finished with a flat roof that would be disguised from the front. This "box" construction would be timber-clad on the rear elevation but the wall finishes generally would continue the materials to be used around the house, described on the drawing of the proposed elevations as a combination of "cementitious white render wall" and brickwork.
 13. The rear elevation would not be readily visible from public viewpoints and, in any case, would not be discordant with the existing building and its surroundings. Indeed, the new white render finish and slate tile roof for the building as a whole would add to variety and interest in the streetscene. The finished building would present a somewhat different architectural image but I have formed the opinion it would not be incongruous or alien in its setting and that it would not conflict with the Development Plan.
 14. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed extensions would be a useful addition to the accommodation at number 15 Annett's Hall. I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted, subject to conditions, and, 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.
 15. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of the conditions suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal). I have concluded that conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained, and, in this respect, I accept the argument that a specific condition is required to define the materials to be used by reference to the approved drawings. The drawings show that existing materials are to be changed and strict adherence to the drawings is therefore necessary.
 16. I also accept that an additional condition is necessary to deal with the requirement for the ground floor level of the finished extension to be kept at the level of the existing ground floor, in order to minimise the risk of flooding.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - unnumbered Ordnance Survey site plan (1:1250);
 - drawing number 15.8500 (Location Plan);
 - drawing number 158501 (Existing Plans);
 - drawing number 15.8502 (Existing Roof Plan);
 - drawing number 15.8503 (Existing Elevations);
 - drawing number 15.8505 (Proposed Floor Plans);
 - drawing number 15.8506 (Proposed Roof Plan);
 - drawing number 15.8507 (Proposed Elevations);
3. All materials used externally shall accord with the approved plans.
4. The finished ground floor level of the extension shall be set no lower than the ground floor level of the existing building.